

What does Leadership and Followership mean in a Post-1992 University Business School?

by

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A thesis submitted to the

University of Birmingham for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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The Business School

University of Birmingham

May 2015

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to evaluate what leadership and followership means in a Post-1992 University Business School. The focus of the research study is in the areas of transformational leadership, followership and distributed leadership within three English post-1992 university business schools. The research proceeds from the perspective of exploring leadership through qualitative methodology and constructivist analysis. Three post 1992 university business schools were selected for the research study. Two were selected because they had experienced multiple reorganisations and changes of Deans and a third was selected because the Dean had been in post for a longer period, during which there had been fewer transforming changes in the business school to influence leader, follower relationships.

The majority of respondents' reported the perception that they did not experience transformational leadership. Furthermore, the respondents were critical of the leadership they were experiencing and a perceived lack of consultation or engagement. Instead of followership, many of the respondents reported disengaging with their colleagues who were in leadership roles. Interestingly, this was reported by some of the Deans as well as professors and lecturers. From the perspectives of the respondents' interviewed, they were not experiencing engagement in distributed leadership. Indeed, some of the Deans interviewed, reported that the exclusion of colleagues from decision-making committees better described their perspectives on leadership.

In the matter of contributing to the leadership of their business schools, some of the respondents reported a perception that their colleagues in senior management posts had a propensity towards selecting external candidates instead of academics currently in the business school. This perception regarding a lack of internal progression was also reported by some of the Deans. Many of the respondents reported experiencing an absence of talent management and career development.

The respondents' perceptions of leadership as reported in this research indicated that followership does not necessarily occur because a person has been designated a leader or because s/he has positional authority, either as a line manager or as a resources gatekeeper. Furthermore, within a complex knowledge based environment, such as a business school, individuals might be both leaders and followers at different times. Accordingly, an academic could be a leader in his/her field of research, without necessarily having a formal management post. However, the resource gatekeepers were reported to limit participation, whether through the time allocations for research, career development, or by denying access to forums in which to influence the direction and development of the business schools.

Furthermore, the respondents reported a propensity by those in management posts to approach complex leadership and followership situations with more controls and reporting systems, and /or as critical events requiring major staff restructuring and redundancies. In two of the cases studied the respondents reported that several restructures had been implemented by a succession of different senior management teams. This included numerous changes of

Deans and departmental management in a short period of time. Hence, the perception of many respondents was that successive management teams had undertaken similar interventions which failed to address whatever they perceived to be a problem. Whereby the cases study managers perceived themselves unable to resist what the system required and/or were compelled to impose control measures.

Hence, the apparent default to address situations with either more controls or restructuring needs to be re-evaluated. This would necessitate a more inclusive leadership, which thereby nurtures and retains academic talent and actively encourages engagement in decisions by the academic community.

On the basis of the findings, it is proposed that addressing such situations with more controls or re-structuring is both inappropriate and inadequate. What is required is a more inclusive academic community. The research indicates that blended leadership, which is consultative and distributed, will encourage more collegiate engagement and thereby promote a climate within which each person can contribute to the effective leadership of the institutions concerned.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Chris Mabey and Doctor Tom Bisschoff who have provided stimulating and thought provoking discussions during the PhD journey.

Trudy, who has patiently listened whilst, holidays and weekends were taken up with writing the PhD and talking about aspects of leadership.

Doctor Bradley Saunders who encouraged me and advised on the reviewing process.

This thesis was copy edited for conventions of language, spelling and grammar by a third party editor, Tim Davis.

Numerous colleagues, too many to mention, who asked questions and encouraged reflection on what it means to be a leader. The University of Birmingham, for the facilities, electronic library and administration.

To the respondents who contributed their honest and frank views on academic leadership, your voices have been heard – thank you.

And for anyone reading this who is a doctoral student – enjoy the journey.

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to study a sample of respondents' perceptions of leadership and followership in three English post-1992 university business schools, selected from the former polytechnics, which were awarded university status in 1992 (Pratt, 1997). By the beginning of 2015 the three business schools selected for this research had undergone multiple restructures. The author's interest in this area arises from twenty years of experience working with UK universities, both in the state and private sectors of higher education.

If, as this study argues, leadership is more than positional authority, either as a line manager or as a resources gatekeeper, then what might constitute leadership in a post-1992 business school? The research considers leadership and followership, at a time when some of the post 1992 business schools are addressing challenging changes, which are discussed later in this chapter (Bolden *et al* 2008b; Collinson 2014; Collinson, 2006; Kelloway *et al*, 2000). Situations, which produce unknown and challenging problems, are described by Grint (2008a, p16) as a '*wicked situation*' in his model, which calls for a consultative approach to leadership in unknown situations. Conversely, a tendency towards bureaucratic structures in some business schools may produce administrative gatekeepers who maintain the status quo by holding onto the control of resources (Bolden, 2011; Chreim, 2014; Lumby, 2013). Accordingly, the perceptions of leadership and followership within the business schools is likely to yield a rich source of material as to what effective leadership and followership might look like in a post-1992 university context (Alvesson, 2001; Bolden *et al*, 2011; Rowley and Sherman, 2003).

To better understand such complex situations both researchers and practitioners need to exert some critical reflection upon the circumstances they observe within their universities (Copland *et al*, 2002). It is for this reason that this study plans to give voice to the viewpoints, perspectives and observations of those people who are in management roles as well as those who are not. This dual approach may thereby provide fresh insights into leader / follower attitudes and perceptions. Furthermore, whilst some leadership research has tended to approach this area of study from a positivistic and functionalist perspective, this thesis takes the view that the complexity of the environment being studied indicates that an interpretive approach could yield more in-depth material (Burgoyne and James, 2003).

1.1 Historical Background of Post 1992 Universities

The post 1992 universities came about as a result of the government's policy to expand higher education in the 1990s. Accordingly, the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 almost doubled the number of universities to 84. The Education Reform Act of 1988 abolished the University Grants Committee (UGC). According to Anderson in Withers (2009) the changes introduced by both the 1988 Act and the White Paper of 1986, encouraged more managerial control. Hence, the new post 1992 universities came into being at a time where there was an expansion of university participation together with many institutions becoming universities. This is of interest to the research in that a managerial ethos, if retained to the present times, (2015 at the time of writing) might influence current perceptions of leadership and followership within these institutions.

In 2015, the post 1992 universities are part of a diverse range of institutions engaged in higher education provision; a list of the post 1992 universities is noted below. The development of universities in England has grown apace in recent times. For example, in the nineteenth century England had two universities, until the creation of the university of London, in 1886. The next set of universities to be formed was referred to as the Red brick universities because of their city locations. The red brick universities came into being during the 1900s, the first of which was the University of Birmingham.

It then took several more decades to the 1960's before the next group, which were referred to as the plate glass universities were established in the 1960s (Robbins Report 1963). The post 1992 universities arrived in the 1990s followed by another smaller group of new universities in the early 2000s. Hence, post-eighteen educational provisions are served by a multiplicity of institutions, differentiated by traditions and focus of interest (Marginson, 2006).

Most recently the new additions to the university sector have come from the private sector, namely BPP and Regent's University London in 2013. These new entrants tend, on balance, to be more teaching orientated, although they do engage in organisational research studies and have active connections with the business sector and professional chartered bodies. However, they are different from the state funded universities in that they depend directly on student fees and commercial income instead of state funding (Dearing Report, 1997; Hefce Report 2014; Morgan 2015; Morgan and Newman, 2010; Newman 2010; Shepherd 2010).

Figure 1: The post 1992 Universities

Name	University status
Napier University	1992
Anglia Ruskin University	1992
Birmingham City University	1992
Bournemouth University	1992
University of Brighton	1992
University of Central Lancashire	1992
De Montfort University	1992
Coventry University	1992
University of Derby	1992
University of East London	1992
University of Glamorgan	1992
University of Greenwich	1992
University of Hertfordshire	1992
University of Huddersfield	1992
Kingston University	1992
Leeds Beckett University	1992
University of Lincoln	1992
Liverpool John Moores University	1992
London South Bank University	1992
Manchester Metropolitan University	1992

Middlesex University	1992
Northumbria University	1992
Nottingham Trent University	1992
Oxford Brookes University	1992
University of the West of Scotland	1992
University of Plymouth	1992
University of Portsmouth	1992
The Robert Gordon University	1992
Sheffield Hallam University	1992
Staffordshire University	1992
University of Sunderland	1992
Teesside University	1992
University of West London	1992
University of Westminster	1992
University of the West of England	1992
University of Wolverhampton	1992
Glasgow Caledonian University	1993
University of Abertay Dundee	1994

From: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

According to the research data gathered for the Hefce Report (2014), the changes which may influence student participation levels, such as the increase in tuition fees, have had impacted variably on different segments of the sector.

‘Declines of more than 10 per cent were seen at 28 higher education institutions and 17 further education colleges. The majority of the higher education institutions experiencing these levels of decline were ones where entrants had low or medium average tariff scores. The overall increase in further education colleges reflects broader shifts away from provision franchised from HEIs, with colleges now offering more higher education directly.’

Hefce Report (2014 pp. 90-121. (Source: Analysis of the HESA standard registration population at English HEIs, 2005-06 to 2012-13). During periods of change, the relationships between leaders and staff can be placed under pressure, whether from managing rapid growth, when student numbers were increased during the 1990s, or the reduction of government funding in the late 2000s onward. Such transforming situations may consequently surface rifts in trust and expose leadership and followership to new tensions (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003; Goffee and Jones 2001; Harris, 2008). The post-1992 business schools are of research interest because they continue to be exposed to transforming internal and external forces of change. They therefore provide interesting case-studies as to what it means to be a leader and a follower within a changing institutional environment. Accordingly, a sample of respondents has been selected to explore their perceptions of leadership and followership. It is also of interest to the research to study academics in business schools where respondents generally have access to and or personal expertise in leadership theory. The research setting is therefore with a sample of respondents working in

business schools which may be experiencing significant transformations in their working environment, and may consequently be interested in the questions of what leadership or followership might mean to them in transformational change circumstances. Furthermore, the knowledge base of the participants may produce some insightful dissonances between theoretical knowledge and experiential perceptions regarding the leadership and followership relationships in their business schools (Brookes, 2007; English, 2002).

1.2 Research questions

- *Within a transforming environment for post-1992 business schools what part, if any, does transformational leadership contribute?*
- *What is the role of followers in a post-1992 business school context?*
- *What are the perceptions of reality or rhetoric of distributed leadership?*

1.3 The economic context surrounding Post-1992 Universities

The availability of government funding influences what state universities can provide in terms of teaching students and research activities. Furthermore, the affluence of society in general and confidence in the availability of jobs influences whether prospective students are prepared to accrue debts to fund a higher education programme of study, at both undergraduate or postgraduate levels (Connolly, 2003; Pfeffer and Fong, 2003). In this introductory chapter it is therefore constructive to consider the economic climate in which business school leadership will be evaluated in subsequent chapters.

The economic events of the late 2000s, leading to the public sector financial reorganisation which followed, are relevant to this research into leadership within post-1992 business schools because changes in the financial environment at this time influenced the kind of activities that the universities could undertake, and consequently the context of leadership decisions. Indeed, the economic events of the late 2000s were to produce a reversal of fortunes for public sector finances, upon which universities significantly depend (Arthur and Piatt, 2010; Morgan and Newman, 2010). For example, some of the universities which depend more for their funding on ‘*entrants [with] low or medium average tariff scores*’ have been more adversely impacted by change than other parts of the sector (Hefce Report (2014, pp. 90-121).

The financial catalyst for the changes in public finances in the UK began in the banking sector (Thain, 2009). Traditional banking practice had been for mortgages and loans to be kept inside the originating bank’s books; but by transferring the credit risk to other financial institutions the traditional banking model was replaced by a complex distribution of debts, so that the original bank could offset the risk of lending to less secure customers, outside the prime market of well-secured borrowers (Brunnermeier, 2008). This riskier sub-prime market was necessarily populated by individual mortgagees and businesses, which were more likely to default upon their loans if they experienced a financial downturn. Whilst lending to new customers expanded the banks’ market, it also exposed them to far greater risks (Duffe, 2007). More critically for financial stability, it exposed the complex international network of banks and insurance companies, which had secured the distributed debt, to ‘*systemic risk in*

financial systems,’ if the financial growth rates were to plateau (Eisenberg and Noe, 2001, pp. 236–249). Following an economic downturn, with multiple defaults in 2008 and 2009, there was a rapid and catastrophic collapse in banking confidence, with some global names failing and others having to be bailed out with huge sums of money injected by governments to maintain the global financial equilibrium. Hence, within a short period of time there was a worldwide reversal from the free flow of capital which led to much more cautious lending practices. There followed a systemic *‘liquidity shortage and a banking crisis’* (Diamond *et al*, 2005 pp.615–647). These events were generically described as the *‘credit crunch’* (Thain, 2009, pp. 434-449).

The UK government’s public sector finances were reassessed as a consequence of the debt levels incurred to support banks during the financial crisis. The magnitude of the debt would necessitate public sector spending reductions for the foreseeable future. This would therefore have significant long-term implications for the availability of public finance and the distribution of monies to public services, including education. Consequently, the higher education sector, including its world-class research institutions, the more teaching-focused newer universities and further education colleges would have considerably less funding from the government. The head of the Higher Education Funding Council commented that: *‘academy’s case for investment would have to compete with the claims of schools, health and policing, as well as the “elephant in the room”, the UK’s £178 billion budget deficit’* (Morgan, 2010, p.9). Following the economic credit crunch and the subsequent economic downturn, the reductions to public finances announced in the budget statement for the

parliament on 22 June 2010 confirmed that universities would have to rely less upon state funding.

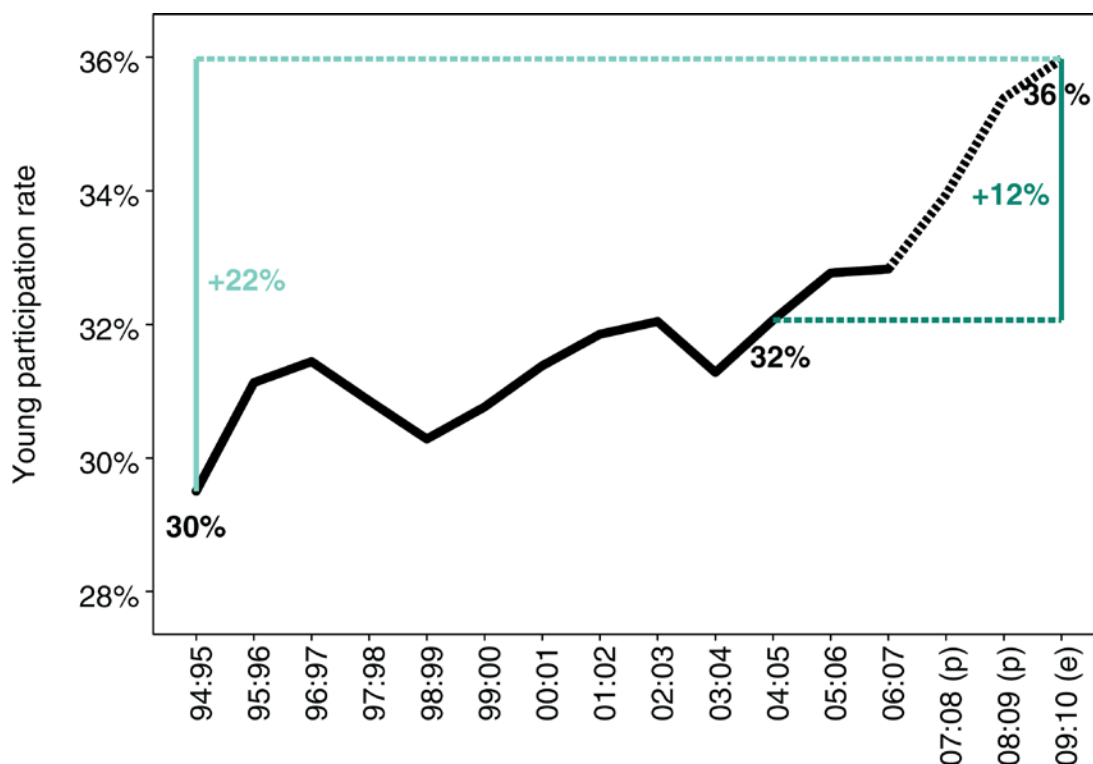
1.1. Reversals of fortune

A transformation of a completely different kind had occurred in higher education during the late 1990s. The incoming New Labour government of 1997 had heralded a transformation in student university participation and funding to include a higher proportion of school leavers into post-eighteen education (The Dearing Report, National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997: *Higher Education in the Learning Society*). The then new Prime Minister, Tony Blair, asserted that the government would prioritise education and increase funding (Coughlan, 2007). The 1997 Labour government's aspiration for higher education was to transform student participation levels, so that universities would eventually accept fifty per cent of school leavers (The Dearing Report, National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997). To place this within an historical context, participation rates in the mid-twentieth century had been below ten per cent of the school leaver population. The universities therefore received additional funding from government in order to expand the number of places they could offer to students. These policies consequently heralded a transformational change in the demographics of the higher education student population and, with it, the expectations of a generation of young people for opportunities in employment and social mobility.

The figure below is taken from the HEFCE statistical report, January 2010 which set out the

anticipated growth in student participation in higher education from the mid-1990s to 2010. HEFCE's estimation for the September 2010 cohort was that there would be 239,000 entrants to higher education. This would represent an increase of 77,000 in comparison to the 162,000 from the cohort of 1994 / 95, an increase of nearly 50 per cent. However, the plans altered when the changes to public sector funding were announced on 22 June 2010 by the Coalition government, thereby reducing the number of student places allocated for funding (Hefce Report 2014).

Figure 2: Trends in participation in Higher Education for England (HEFCE report)



It is consequently not surprising that an Emeritus Professor of Education, of the Institute of

Education in London has questioned what a university might be in the contemporary age (Barnett, 2009). The answer might be a range of providers, with research-intensive focused institutions at one end of the spectrum and teaching-intensive colleges at the other. If so, the metamorphosis, which began in the 1990s with the inclusion of the polytechnics into the university community, raises interesting questions about what it might mean to be an academic in the twenty-first century.

During the 1990s business schools in the newly formed post-1992 universities offered the expanding population of students degrees with the vocational content from their polytechnic heritage (Pratt, 1997). Whilst all parts of the higher education sector benefited from the increased funding, the post-1992s were favourably constituted to receive larger numbers of students, since these former polytechnics tended to focus on teaching and encouraged widening participation for students whose achievements at school would not usually have gained them entry into the more traditional universities (Pratt, 1997). Furthermore, business schools in the post-1992 universities were in an environment where the more traditional, research-led universities were less active. For example, Oxford University did not have a business school until 1996, when it opened the Saïd Business School (SBS) (Marginson, 2006). The post-1992 universities were thereby the beneficiaries of the aspirations to widen UK student university population in the 1990s and early 2000s, but consequently less resilient to the reversal of policy following the economic downturn and reductions in funding during the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Prior to the UK's education funding increases of the 1990s and 2000s, the government's investment in the sector was lower than the sum invested by other comparable industrialised countries. Furthermore, the 1997 Government's funding increases, when compared with other industrialised nations' expenditure, was not as financially magnanimous as it had asserted. Instead, the improvements in funding education eventually lifted levels in the United Kingdom to a comparable average with other leading nations. For example, the expanded education expenditure of the 1990s and 2000s took the budget to 5.6% of GDP, which compares to the current average for education of 5.5% of GDP in the other industrialised countries. The reality, rather than the governmental rhetoric, was that during two decades of investment in education, the UK had moved from behind the average, for an industrialised nation, to the average rate of investment. However, this also coincided with the widening participation policy, which meant that the teaching-focused post-1992s were serving a much larger population of students with average, rather than world-class, financial resources (Coughlan 2007; Henkel, 2005).

1.2. Crisis? What Crisis?

The economic crisis with its consequent national debt will continue to impact upon government finances for many years to come (Thain, 2009). As a result, the reversal of national fortunes has precipitated a crisis in the funding of public services, and consequently for higher education which continues to influence some universities finances (Hefce Report 2014). This is likely to be more pronounced than in other areas of public service. The reason

for this stems from political expediency. Targeting larger financial cutbacks in higher education is likely to be less politically sensitive than shutting down hospital wards or schools or reducing social benefits for families in unemployment. The universities therefore need to be able to make their case for investment in a constrained financial environment where significant public spending reductions are required due to the financial deficit following the banking crisis (Diamond and Rajan, 2005; Morgan and Newman, 2010).

The debt crisis therefore has significant – some might argue seismic – consequences for higher education funding in 2010 and onward (Arthur and Piatt, 2010; Shepherd, 2010). The UK government's reductions to the number of places for UK students entering HE, which is, in reality, a reversal of the former policy instituted by the Labour government of 1997 which planned to increase participation of school leavers (The Dearing Report, National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997: *Higher Education in the Learning Society*). For example, in 2009, the government's restrictions on student intake numbers left many prospective students without a university place (Attwood, 2009). Furthermore, the realisation that the crisis had arrived was made explicit with the spending cuts announcements of Christmas 2009, which planned a one-third reduction in government expenditure on higher education, from 2010 onward (Morgan and Newman, 2010).

During the late 1990s, the environment had been more financially lucrative for the post-1992 universities, though that may not have been appreciated at the time. For example, in the 1990s the marketing challenge for leaders of new post-1992 universities was to identify a

niche into which they could build a sustainable foundation for growth (Maringe, 2005). This was not too difficult to find, given the government's commitment at that time to widening participation and the growing interest of students in vocational degrees. Hence there was an opportunity for the vocationally orientated post-1992 universities to expand their provision in popular areas such as business-related programmes which differentiated this group of universities from those which had been established for decades and in some cases hundreds of years, providing arts and sciences subjects. This placed the business schools within a substantial area of growth, financed by the government, teaching large numbers of undergraduates in business studies subject areas.

In this way, post-1992 universities in the 1990s could focus on managing growth, but with consequential issues arising from larger class sizes and from pressures to increase the teaching workloads for academics. So the 1990s were a period of transformation in academic workloads, with potential tensions between academic course leaders and their colleagues who were required to organise and teach large groups of students. To be a leader or a follower within such a transforming public sector institutional environment raised potentially difficult challenges, as a result, for both those in leadership positions and the lecturers who had to organise and teach large intakes of students (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991). Indeed, transformational changes to the conventions of public service and the prevailing bureaucracy generated organisational difficulties and conflicts for the members of institutions, which continue to experience rapid revisions of workloads, priorities and mission (Clarke and Butcher 2009; Newman, 2002).

There were also criticisms by some commentators regarding the expansion in student numbers and the resulting changes in relationships between students and their universities. For example, within the context of a more competitive market for students, university marketing departments began to perceive them as income-generating customers (Giroux 2003). Indeed, with a financial framework in which, government funding followed the student placement; such changes were probably inevitable in what effectively became a competitive market for students. Consequently, the changes, which were set in motion by government policies of the late 1990s, had the tendency to realign higher education towards more market-led, commercial and utilitarian interests (Willmott, 1998).

The crisis in public funding was confirmed with the publication of the government's plans for cutbacks in higher education expenditure, announced during the Christmas period of 2009 (Morgan and Newman, 2010; Arthur and Piatt, 2010). Confronted with a large budget deficit, the government also planned reductions in the number of state funded places for 2009 onward. An early indication of the extent of the cutbacks to come can be found in the reported twenty per cent cuts in department funding at the University of Leeds (Newman, 2010). The endemic financial problems were highlighted by the report into higher education finances by PricewaterhouseCoopers, appropriately entitled: *Weathering the storm: Coping with financial challenge in the higher education sector*, cited in Newman (2010). The report found that, even during the financing boom in the late 1990s and mid-2000s, forty-one higher education institutions had run into financial deficit.

The crisis in public sector finances and the reductions in state-funded student places opened the higher education market to more proactive participation by private colleges (Morgan and Newman, 2010; Thain, 2009). In difficult economic times the risks and costs of entry for private colleges were mitigated by opportunities to meet the demand for more teaching-focused institutions. This was possible because to some extent the post-1992 universities had relinquished their polytechnic, teaching-orientated heritage, to emulate the research agenda of the traditional universities (Stone and Grønhaug, 1993).

Conversely, the commercial approach to delivering degree programmes was to focus on teaching and encourage faster progression and completion rates. The reason for this is that it is financially efficient for students to successfully complete a degree in a shorter period of time, and also for the institution, in terms of staffing costs; hence the construction of accelerated programme structures and pathways to degrees. Perhaps more significantly, private colleges could offer students whose learning expectations were shaped by the league table driven national curriculum in the UK a learning environment geared towards teaching as the college's primary activity.

Private colleges might therefore market themselves as more teaching-orientated than either the research-led traditional universities, or the post-1992 universities (Griffiths and Grimston, 2010). However, whilst the prestige accrued to the international reputations of the research-intensive universities would be likely to ensure continuing student recruitment, the same

might not be the case for the post-1992 universities when exposed to commercial competition for students (Marginson, 2006). Hence the successful period of student recruitment in the 1990s and early 2000s created a social expectation for higher education, which would encourage new entrants in what had become a global market for students.

1.3. Student Participation 1990s to 2015

The growth in participation in the 1990s led to questions about how higher education should be delivered in the twenty-first century (Bridges, 2000). To place this in context, the university community, which had served a minority of the UK population for centuries, was changing so rapidly that both the numbers and ability range of students increased comprehensively. By the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century the demographic profile of the undergraduate population was radically different from what it had been in the 1970s and 80s. The traditional boundaries which distinguished a university from other forms of vocational training and development became less distinct, not least because many more institutions were awarded university status when the polytechnics formed the post-1992 university group.

In hindsight, the changes in university provision were probably inevitable, given the transformation of government policies and the changes in student participation. An analogy for this changing environment might be that of visitors to an isolated retreat, which, once popularised, becomes different from the original experience. In the context of this research, the word ‘different’ is not a value judgement; it simply implies a qualitative change.

However, there are academics that would argue, reasonably, that the changes in the student demographic have caused a lowering of general academic attainment (Bridges, 2000). It seems inevitable that some educational changes would occur, given that participation levels expanded rapidly from single number percentages to nearly fifty per cent of the school-leaving population. However, university participation has also become more egalitarian, which means that more citizens can enjoy some exposure to learning at a higher level than the school national curriculum, which is arguably a benefit to society.

The increasing participation of students in higher education has been financially beneficial to the UK economy. According to the Government's own statistics, the higher educational sector is a significant contributor to GDP through the income accrued from international student recruitment. For example, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency's statistics for 2006 there were 330,060 non-UK domiciled students studying in British universities, including 106,230 European Union students and 223,830 non-EU students. Through their fees and living expenses, these international students contributed substantially to the wealth of the UK (Huang, 2008; The Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2006). Conversely, by 2015 for some providers, though not all, student numbers had declined. Given that the declines were found to be with institutions that recruited in medium to low entrance levels, the reversal of fortunes would impact more upon those newer universities than the longer established ones (Hefce Report (2014)).

1.4. Leadership and Followership in Post-1992 University Business Schools

It is evident from the discussion in the earlier part of this chapter that governmental policies, funding that by 2014 the competitive environment for students have initiated transformative changes in many universities. The decrease in student participation that followed the changes in government policy in 2009 has exposed parts of the post-1992 business schools to a rapidly transforming environment (Hefce Report (2014). These changes have therefore raised challenging questions about what it means to lead and follow in a transforming knowledge-based environment (Connolly, 2003; Griffiths and Grimston 2010; Henkel, 2005; Morgan and Newman, 2010; Newman, 2002; Pfeffer and Fong 2003).

An evaluation of leader / follower relationships is necessarily contextualised within the customs and practices which inform the collegiate iconography and institutional organisational heritage of post-1992 business schools. Hence, each business school is likely to have inherited its own particular structures and informally accepted organisational practices from its polytechnic heritage (Pratt, 1997). In the context of the post-1992 business schools, their heritage may have endowed them with a bureaucratic management framework, which may mean that the structure responds more easily to the adoption of governmental controls than to changes in the competitive environment. If so, then leadership development and the processes of leader selection could enhance the business schools' responsiveness to their changing environment (Densten and Gray 2001; Kaagan, 1998).

Additionally, informal practices are likely to co-exist within the formal structural heritage, influencing the leadership and followership. Furthermore, each business school will have its own situation-specific leadership culture and sub-cultures. However, informal customs in leadership would not necessarily lead the business school to be more receptive to change, nor to be more egalitarian and inclusive, than a formalised leadership structure. For example, on eight occasions, a paper by Deem (1998) cited the importance of trust as being significant to sustain what, it described as ‘gentlemanly’ governance practices, as an alternative to formal leadership structures. Yet the term to support gentlemanly governance practices itself portrays a potential for deference to the established organisational customs and gender values, which may not readily facilitate the acceptance of changes in response to the transforming external environment. This raises interesting questions about whether a benevolent meritocracy can provide sustainable, equitable leadership, or if it is better suited to the organisation of academia than formalised leadership. Conversely, the challenges which some post 1992 business schools need to address in 2015 onward, may be more complex and different to those which can be resolved through more controls and data reporting systems (Barnett, 2009; Connolly, 2003; Grint 2008; Marginson, 2006; Newman, 2002).

It is possible that for some academics that wish to develop their research, leadership roles in business schools might be regarded as bureaucratic diversions from their primary research interests. Accordingly, it will be instructive to hear what comments and observations

academics have to offer about leading in a business school context (Collinson 2014; Collinson, 2006; Kelloway *et al*, 2000). Indeed, from an individualistic perspective, to what extent does serving as a leader represent a career priority to academics in a post-1992 university business school? Conversely, how much engagement are academic colleagues willing to input as proactive followers by contributing to the evaluation of how and what should be done for the collective benefit of their university community (Goffee and Jones, 2001)? It might also be the case that individuals wishing to build an academic career may find that it is best achieved by networking with the community of scholars outside their own institutions (Greenleaf *et al*, 2003; Harris, 2008). If this were to be indicated in the research findings then it may be that the pool of people who are able, interested and willing to engage with academic management may be few, in so far as some academics may elect to invest their time and energies in research and other scholarly activities instead of managing the organisation.

The notion that a university might be organised like a business is disdained by some academics as contrary to the traditions of academia. This perspective was forcibly articulated in the actions of academics in Oxford University when they believed that their vice chancellor was attempting to reorganise the university towards a more business-styled organisational structure (Cassidy, 2005). Indeed, the adoption of neo-managerialism as a method of directing a public sector university towards a more market-driven ethos might be regarded by some in the post-1992 business schools as detracting from the traditions of public service (Terry, 1998). Conversely, it may be argued that if there is disengagement

from leadership, this may, by default, permit a slide towards leader autocracy. Yet if such leadership styles prevail, they would create the antithesis of an autonomous learning environment where trust and collegiality guide the course of the School / University (Cassidy, 2005; Reynolds, 1999).

This research consequently plans to study business school environments and critically evaluates leadership in situations where it is possible that colleagues may regard managerial control antipathetically (Paauwe and Williams, 2001). For this purpose the research plans to study the perceptions of academic leadership and followership, where even the terms ‘leader’ and ‘follower’ may not be part of the social perception (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008, p.79). Indeed the research may indicate that there are contradictions between the aspirations for distributed, consultative leadership and the bureaucratic controls which persist in some post-1992 universities. Furthermore, there may be contextual barriers in the organisational structures of post-1992 business schools to the empowerment of academic distributed leadership (Lumby 2013; Spillane, 2006).

1.5. Chapter Summary

Where does this take the research of leadership in a post-1992 university business school context? In the current economy, (2015 at the time of writing) the forces of change, both economic, and student participation are likely to require proactive initiatives by leaders and followers. The post-1992 business schools expanded to accommodate the burgeoning numbers of undergraduates during the years that followed the 1997 Labour government's pledge to increase school leaver participation to fifty per cent, so they are consequently likely to be more susceptible to the reductions in state funding. Following the economic credit crunch in the UK and the subsequent economic downturn, the reductions to public finances announced in the budget statement for the Coalition government's parliament on 22 June 2010 has led to a reversal of fortunes for the finances, for some though not all, of the post-1992 university business schools by 2015 (Hefce Report 2014)

During the growth years in state funding in higher education, which went with the increasing participation by UK students, the business schools, became a major financial contributor to university funds. This means that the future direction and development of the post-1992 business schools has wider implications for the higher education community. This research may surface interesting questions regarding how leadership and followership can respond to the transforming environment, which could have implications for how business schools are led.

Furthermore, it is in the area of teaching that the competition for students from other parts of the higher education sector has intensified in recent years. The wider competition for students includes a range of other universities and new entrants from the private sector, as well as greater engagement by Further Education colleges. For example, two private providers have been awarded degree-awarding powers recent years, BPP and Regent's University London. By 2015, the potential impact of new competitors, together with the increased tuition fees has produced an environment where student numbers, for some business schools, is not going to be at the same level as in the late 1990s. This means that the post-1992 university business schools can expect significant competition for students and less financial support from government funds. It is timely therefore to research how academics respond to their changed situation and the implications this may have for the leader / follower relations in the post-1992 business schools.

There is consequently an opportunity for leadership research to be progressed with a group of people who are not only in a learning environment where leadership theories are understood, but who are themselves experiencing significant transformations in their working environment, and would see relevance in the question of what it might mean for leadership or followership in transformational circumstances.

1.6. Brief Summary of Chapters

The thesis is presented in eight chapters.

Chapter one: The introductory chapter outlines the environmental context for the subsequent research on three English Post 1992 university business schools. The purpose of the introductory chapter is to contextualise the research within an environment, which has been subject to periods of major changes (Hefce Report, 2014).

In consequence, the interpersonal relationships of academics in the business schools may have been placed under pressures, whether from managing rapid growth, when student numbers increased during the 1990s, or by the reduction of government funding and changing student expectations following the increase in tuition fees. Such transforming situations may surface rifts and dissonances in expectations and expose interesting aspects of leadership and followership behaviour in a transforming organisational context.

The thesis has two literature chapters.

Chapter two: The purpose of the first literature chapter is to evaluate transformational leadership and followership within a higher education context. In studying the literature, questions surfaced regarding the efficacy of transformational leadership theory in the context of the three studied post-1992 university business schools, where leadership/ followership are arguably more fluid, sometimes interchangeable. For example, in a complex knowledge-based environment, it is probable that individuals might serve as both leaders and followers in different circumstances.

The chapter also explored the literature evaluating the possibility that people in management roles might have a predisposition to a particular approach in their leadership behaviour. For example, if a person who has built a career by methodically managing the business school's bureaucracy s/he might address new situations by increasing managerial control mechanisms, even if that may not be the appropriate approach to addressing a particular new and complex situation.

Chapter three: The second literature chapter considers the implications of leadership research for higher education and in particular the place of distributed leadership. The chapter considers whether there might be tensions between academics' theoretical awareness and the practices of leadership, with regard to their felt experiences of leadership and the influence which those experiences may have upon leader / follower relationships. The chapter further, considers the possibility that there might be personal dissonances and conflicts between the aspirations of how a person may want to lead and the constraints of their formal job role. Accordingly the subsequent research may surface interesting juxtapositions between leadership theories and what respondents' report as their perceptions of contextual realities.

The literature on leadership in education identified the benefits of distributing leadership within educational organisations. This study noted an accumulating research interest in distributive leadership within the education and leadership research community. However, there may be potentially significant impediments to changes to the status quo within some higher education providers. Furthermore, the resilient nature of both established centres of

individual power, supported by long established bureaucratic hierarchies and reporting systems, might impede the fruition of distributive leadership.

Chapter four: reflects upon the philosophical perspectives underpinning the research, reflexivity, and the discussion of discourses. The process of reflexivity has contributed to the evolution of the epistemology and ontology of the research. In reviewing the discourses and reflecting upon the epistemological and ontological choices, the research sits broadly within constructivism.

A framework has been adapted for this research into university business schools informed by the descriptions of four discourses as described in the framework by Mabey, and Finch-Lees (2008). This research indicated that in a complex knowledge based environment there was likely to be no single predominant objective reality of leadership or followership. Hence the research focus is from a constructivist perspective. I am cognisant that as a researcher I selected the epistemology and in selecting to focus on particular literatures by definition meant excluding others too. Each researcher brings their knowledge and life experiences into their research. In my case that experience has enabled me to appreciate the respondents' context and recognise that there are different perceptions of reality (Mordechai, 2009).

Chapter five: This chapter sets out the research plan and qualitative methodology. The sampling strategy is discussed, including the selection of interviewees. Also the coding plan

for studying the data within a thick description of context (Geertz, 1973; Ponterotto, 2006). The ethical considerations for the research are also discussed in this chapter. The reflective rigour of preparing the research methodology and the University of Birmingham's application for ethical review focused the research and thereby attained the respect of academic respondents who agreed to participate in the research. For example, Dean B Current is later reported as commenting that s/he had only agreed to take part and allow the business school to be studied because s/he was impressed by the quality of the research proposal.

The primary data will be critically evaluated, compared, and contrasted with the literature review. Accordingly, Tesch (1990) advises researchers to: *'Divide the text into segments, and then sort these segments into groups.'* (Tesch (1990 p114). In this research the respondents' transcripts were initially organised into similar leadership / followership sets in each business school. The sets were then sub-divided across the three cases so that people in similar roles could be compared to surface similarities or differences in respondents' perceptions.

The sets of transcripts gathered will be compared both from within each case study and contrasted across the three cases to surface any commonalities of perspectives on transformational leadership, followership and distributed leadership. Indeed, the similarities between respondents in different cases who do not know each other is interesting in surfacing themes of perceptions throughout the full sample set. The process of continuous comparative reviews thereby surfaced *'themes'* which are set out in the findings chapter (Tesch (1990 p114).

Chapter six: The presentation of the findings. The respondents reported here have been candid with their observations and experiences of leadership in their business schools. What emerged from the twenty respondents, who worked in different universities and did not know each other, was interesting similarities of perceptions on the areas of transformational leadership, followership and distributed leadership.

In reporting their experiences and perceptions of leadership and followership, the respondents have surfaced some interesting dissonances between leadership theories, as discussed in the literature review, and their experiences of leadership in their post-1992 university business schools. The respondents' reported perceptions of leadership and followership differ from what might have been expected within a community of scholars. Furthermore, the reported examples of autocratic leadership were neither transformational, nor distributive. Instead, the respondents' reported examples of hierarchical leadership and micro-management.

The respondents have thereby provided this research with a rich source of information about their perceptions of leadership and followership. The findings indicate a predominantly functionalist environment, with limited indications of distributed leadership and consequential disengagement and disaffection with regards to a lack of leader/ follower engagement.

Chapter seven: is the analysis chapter and evaluates the research findings in relation to the literature review and the themes which emerged from the primary research.

The respondent's reported that there are difficulties for both leadership and followership in a context of continuing instability (Collinson, 2014). According to Grint (2008a, p16). in such circumstances the unknown nature of the transformational changes are better addressed as a '*wicked situation*' in his model, which recommends a consultative approach to leadership in unknown situations. Bolden et al (2008b) also supports a consultative approach to leadership.

The respondents in all the three case-studies shared a communality of perceptions regarding the instabilities produced by frequent faculty reorganisations. For example, respondents reported frequent changes such as restructuring, including changes of Deans and management teams, redundancies and reorganisations, with little or no meaningful consultation with academic staff (Koen and Bitzer, 2010; Kok *et al*, 2010).

The research studied whether distributed leadership was part of the sensed reality for the respondents. In conducting the interviews and analysing the respondents' perception of their leadership there were few examples of reported of distributed leadership. Indeed, the respondents indicate inherent contradictions between the aspirations for distributed, consultative leadership and the bureaucratic controls they felt were being used to manage their academic environment.

A shift in patterns of influence was in evidence; with much more rapid and recurrent implementations of transformative restructuring of academic posts and redundancies than that which is generally reported in the literature. According to the report by the Commission on

the Future of Management and Leadership (2014), one of the challenges for organisations is to develop talent by retaining people and building leaders from within the organisations. The respondents' reported here did not indicate that this was happening for them.

Chapter eight: concludes the thesis, setting out the contribution to leadership knowledge and making recommendations for future research and indicating possible limitations.

The research evaluated leadership and followership, focusing on transformational leadership, followership and distributed leadership. Within the three business schools studied, the experiences reported by the respondents' indicated dissonances between those experiences and how knowledge workers could be led, according to the leadership literature which was discussed in the literature review chapters (Bolden, *et al* 2014; Chreim, 2014; Collinson, 2014; Jones, *et al* 2014).

In reviewing what the respondents' reported across the three cases there were interesting similarities in the matter of tenure and employment security. For example, during the course of the research there were multiple changes of Deans. Hence, Dean C2 Acting was not interviewed for the permanent post of Dean at C case-study and left to become the Dean of another university. S/he then subsequently left that post too and moved to another business school and then moved again by 2014. Dean B1 Present has also left the B University, whilst the longest serving of the Deans in the three cases, Dean A1 Current, has also left the A University for a more senior appointment with another post-1992 university. Accordingly, all the Deans, except one newly appointed Dean in the C University had moved posts by late 2014/early 2015.

The concurrence of similar perceptions by respondents in the three cases suggests that the leadership they have experienced not concur with their perceptions of how leadership should/could be. Indeed, some of the respondents commented that they considered leadership in post-1992 universities to be an unattractive career choice.

The research indicated similarities in how problems are addressed as, '*Tame*' or '*Critical*' when the descriptions of problems which respondents, including five Deans offer suggests that the problems sit in the '*Wicked*' typology (Grint,2008a) This contributes to our awareness of, albeit unconscious choices by people to apply problem solving approaches which have been previously applied in their organisational context.

2. Literature Review 1: Leadership and Followership in a Post-1992 University Business School Context

2.1. Leadership and followership

At the core of the leadership / followership discussion remains the question of what, for the purposes of research into post-1992 university business schools, constitutes leading and following? If, as this study argues, it is insufficient for a person to be designated a leader just because s/he has positional authority, either as a line manager or as a resources gatekeeper, then what might constitute leadership in a post-1992 business school? Within a complex environment, such as a university, it is also possible that individuals might be both leaders and followers at different times. Furthermore, it is also possible, even likely, that an academic might be thought of as a leader in his / her field of research. Hence, an academic might have significant influence upon the wider academic community, whilst not holding any formal leadership position within his / her own university. Yet an individual of influence quite probably expresses leadership informally and in situations where others may choose to follow his / her perspectives and ideas on a particular matter, whether organisational or professional (Peck and Dickinson, 2009, p34).

It is also significant for this research to consider the particular context in which the leadership and / or followership functions, particularly at a time when the environment of higher education is rapidly changing. For example, the bureaucratic structure of post-1992

universities forms a significant part of a context where hierarchies of un-distributed authority may have the power to influence leadership practices (Clarke and Butcher 2009; Eisenstadt, 1968; Henkel, 2005; Pawar and Eastman, 1997; Pratt, 1997). The post-1992 bureaucratic structures may contain post holders who operate as administrative gatekeepers whether by custom or premeditation, thereby retaining control over resources such as workload audits and conference funding. These centres of undistributed control are likely to impact upon the equity and equilibrium of working schedules inside the university (Lumby, 2013). Hence the relationships between members of these communities of scholars and administrators are likely to be multifaceted and complex and thereby have the potential to yield a rich source of material as to what it might mean to be a leader, follower or both in a post-1992 university context (Alvesson, 2001; Bolden *et al*, 2011; Rowley and Sherman, 2003).

To better understand such complex situations both researchers and practitioners need to exert some critical reflection upon the circumstances they observe within their universities (Copland *et al*, 2002). It is for this reason that this study plans to give voice to the viewpoints, perspectives and observations of those people who are in management roles as well as those who are not. This dual approach may thereby provide fresh insights into leader / follower attitudes and perceptions. Furthermore, whilst some leadership research has tended to approach this area of study from a positivistic and functionalist perspective, this thesis takes the view that the complexity of the environment being studied indicates that an interpretive approach could yield more in-depth material (Burgoyne and James, 2003).

2.2. A Discussion of Transformational Leadership

By 2015 the changes in the economic environment for English universities that were discussed in the introductory chapter had reduced the student recruitment prospects for some though not all, mid-range post 1992 universities (Hefce Report 2014; Morgan and Newman, 2010; Newman, 2010; Newman, 2002). Consequently, for the post-1992 university business schools, which had enjoyed significant expansion in the latter part of the twentieth and early part of the twenty-first century, are now in a more competitive market for students and consequently need to re-evaluate what they can do to respond to the changed environment (Bennis and Toole, 2005).

This part of the literature review considers whether the theory of transformational leadership might be appropriate, or to what degree it is appropriate, to facilitate the transforming changes which are currently happening in the post-1992 university business schools.. Furthermore, if a transformational approach is required to meet the new and complex challenges, to what extent does the theory of transformational leadership serve the brave new world of reduced government funding post-2010 and greater competition for students from within and outside the UK higher education environment? For some commentators, the purpose of seeking leaders with transformational characteristics is because of their perception that leaders with transformational attributes have the: *'potential to motivate the academic community to respond effectively to change,'* (Morrill 2007, p13). Conversely, other studies have argued that the characteristics of the current period of transformational change in universities may render the use of one general theory of leadership less compatible to present

needs than might have been the case in past times, when the ambient environment was comparatively tame (Bargh *et al*, 2000; Grint, 2008a). Furthermore, within an academic community there might be a theory / practice gap, that is to say, dissonances between what might be theoretically regarded as efficacious in transformational leadership theory and the felt experiences of respondents (Brookes, 2007; English, 2002).

The notion that organisations that are faced with major changes require a particular kind of leader has held popular currency for some decades. Indeed, the assumption that new dynamic leadership can transform organisations was part of the rationale for the privatisations of public organisations into private businesses during the 1980s and 1990s. This kind of thinking appears to have permeated into parts of the public sector and universities. For example, an advertisement was placed in the Times Higher Education on 2 April 2009, for the Vice-Chancellor of Leeds Metropolitan University. The prospective applicants for the position were required to demonstrate: *'a record of delivering transformational change.'* If the ability to be a transformational leader, whatever that might mean, is believed to be, at least for some members of the higher education community, a prerequisite to academic leadership, then transformational leadership theory and its contextual application to post-1992 universities is pertinent to this discussion.

In support of the relevance of transformational leadership, a substantial body of research argues for the place and value of the theory, and its application to a broad range of organisational contexts. Transformational leadership theory made its entrance into the

broader sphere of academic discussion with the work of Burns (1978; 2003). Since the 1970s, the notion that transformational leadership can change the fortunes of an organisation has retained some popular appeal in businesses and in parts of the academic community (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2001; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Bass, 1998; Bass, 1999; Boerner *et al*, 2007; Podsakoff *et al*, 1996; Turnbull and Edwards, 2005; Vecchio *et al*, 2008). The continuing popularity of transformational leadership theory also has resonances with the notion of heroic leaders, which concentrates upon the personal characteristics of the person who is a leader (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2001; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Bass, 1999; Posner and Kouzes, 1993). Conversely, the theory places less emphasis upon the responsibilities of other organisational members, other than where they are required to follow their transformational leaders. It is also possible that the longevity of transformational leadership as a theory resides in the popular aspiration that one new appointment to a senior position within an organisation can resolve all the organisational difficulties with a transformational change.

It is consequently relevant to review the characteristics of transformational leadership as defined by its exponents and then reflect upon other studies which have subsequently critically evaluated the theory and its application in organisational contexts. According to Bass and Riggio (2008, p.15) the 'Four "I"s" of transformational leadership' are: *'Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation and Individual consideration'*. These have been the core of transformational leadership theory and have been discussed by other authors who have studied the application of leadership.

For example, Vecchio (2007, p 304) argues that a transformational leader: *'provides vision and sense of mission, instils pride, gains respect and trust. Inspiration: communicates high expectations, uses symbols to focus efforts, expresses important purposes in simple way. Intellectual Stimulation: promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving. Individual Consideration: gives personal attention, treats each employee individually, coaches, advises.'* Accordingly, the methodology that is utilised by transformational leadership supports the proposition that leadership characteristics can be measured. This approach is compatible with the positivistic approach of transformational leadership research, which focuses upon measuring an individual's characteristics (Bass1999; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Bass and Avolio1990b).

The measurement tool utilised with transformational leadership is the multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass and Avolio, 1990a; 1990b; Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2001). The designers of the MLQ test have asserted that they can measure the characteristics of a transformational leader. The MLQ test measure consists of four characteristic areas. These characteristics were generically labelled the 'the Four "I's" of transformational leadership': *Idealised influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individual consideration* (Vecchio 2007, p 304).

According to the theory of transformational leadership, those who display the characteristics of 'Four "I's"' are able to foster better relationships with colleagues and encourage them to exert extra effort into their organisational endeavours (Bass cited in Vecchio, 2007, p. 304).

Furthermore, and in support of the value of transformational leadership, Boerner *et al*, (2007, p.15-26) have argued that: *'transformational leaders boost follower performance by stimulating organizational citizenship behaviour.'* However, the assertion that transformational leadership can be efficacious in all organisational contexts is worthy of some further critical evaluation, and in particular within the educational environments. There is also a question to be asked about the supposition that the multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) measurements can take account of the relationships in a complex environment such as a university, where people may interchange roles from leader to follower in different situations (Yukl, 1999).

The transformational leadership theory presupposes that in a world of complex organisations that a set of personality traits, can thereby transform the fortunes of the organisation. In this mode, authors such as Goleman *et al*, (2002) have offered the proposition that the art of leadership can be transformed into a science of results, which would support the scientific veracity of the questionnaire (MLQ) measurements of leadership. However, other academic studies have evidenced sufficient leadership failures to indicate that there are some gaps between the theory and practice of transformational leadership (Brookes, 2007; English, 2002). Furthermore, organisations can be less than predictable or rational, as observed by Albrow (1997, p105) who has criticised the tendency in some management literature to over emphasise rationality in organisational research: *'...we have to address the hypostatisation of rational action in so much of organisational literature which confuses rational models with empirical reality.'* This supports the possibility of a

theory-practice gap that could be evaluated through the case studied universities and the respondents' interviews (Brookes, 2007; English, 2002).

It can be argued that there are sufficient variances to indicate that what has been observed could be correlations rather than definitive causalities between character traits and leadership performance (Peck and Dickinson 2009, p. 16). Supporting this interpretation, the work of Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008, p. 30), found that: '*...[the] specific behaviours representing these styles [transformational / transactional leadership] may vary profoundly.*' If, as argued by Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) the variances are profound, then it could be difficult to operationalise a selection process, even when guided by references to past performances, because a candidate may or may not be able to deliver a similar set of transforming outcomes in a different organisational context (Osborn *et al*, 2002; Pawar and Eastman, 1997; Porter and McLaughlin, 2006).

A counterbalance to the general efficacy of transformational leadership is to be found in a study which identified a link between transformational leadership behaviour and the generation of dysfunctional team conflict in an educational environment (Kotlyar and Karakowsky, 2007). For the purposes of this research, it will therefore be of interest to observe what academics in post-1992 university business schools might think of the notion, that one leader might transform their environment. The work of Peck and Dickinson (2009 p.60), provides a helpful insight into this matter by identifying what the writers described as '*hierarchical / individualist*' leadership in universities. Consequently, within a university

context, a leader might be tempted to gravitate towards actions which attract the approval of the senior internal and external stakeholders, such as the boards of governors, and quality standard awarding bodies. The difficulty here is that the wider community of their university's academics may feel excluded from the decision-making processes and become alienated from the leader's strategic vision, even if his / her plans are ostensibly constructive. Yet it is that wider community of people who collectively form the core of university activity, in programme management, researching and teaching. Without their active followership, a strategic plan remains an abstract that may not be translated into practice. In this respect it is more likely that leadership needs to be distributed more widely through the organisational community, (Grint, 2005b).

It is, however, perhaps understandable that in uncertain and turbulent times within the education sector the potential panacea of a heroic leader has, for some, become an attractive proposition (Currie *et al*, 2005). Yet there also appears to be a robust case for considering alternative approaches to leadership in higher education, with a re-evaluation of how leadership can serve an organisation (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008, p.32). This will be explored later in this chapter through the discussion of literature on followership and what it might mean to be a leader in times of change and complex problems.

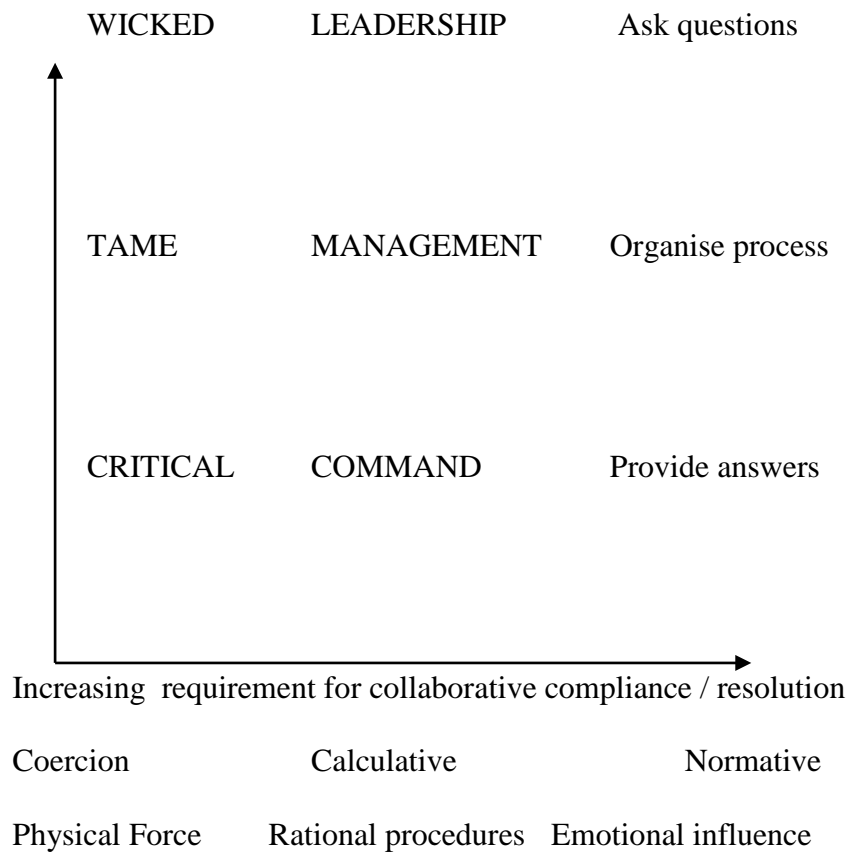
2.3. The Role of Followership

Whilst the transformational academic literature discussed in the earlier section has tended to focus upon the character of the leader person, other researchers have argued that the process of leadership necessarily requires the active engagement of followers. For example, according to Lord and Brown (2004, p3), *'Leaders may indeed be people who can be understood in terms of traits and behavioral styles ... leadership is a social process that involves both a leader and a follower.'* This places followership firmly inside the process of leadership, which is particularly relevant to this research in a context where those who lead and follow may not be as clearly defined as in other organisational environments (Peck and Dickinson 2009).

In the model by Grint, (2008a, p.16) which is set out the diagram below, there is a guide through organisational problems and how they may be identified and addressed.

Figure 3 Typology of Problems, Power and Authority (Grint 2008a, p16)

Increasing uncertainty about the solution to problem



In Grint's model the appropriate response to a problem depends upon whether it is identified as Critical, Tame or Wicked (Brookes and Grint 2010; Grint, 2014). Accordingly, it is reasonable to extrapolate from Grint's model that if a leader is inclined towards functioning in a preferred mode of leadership, that might not always be helpful in leading complex organisations, such as a university within a rapidly transforming environment (Bargh *et al*, 2000; Koen and Bitzer, 2010).

The earlier work by Grint (2003, p.203) indicates that the relationship between leaders and their colleagues is likely to be more relevant than the personal characteristics of the leader as defined by the multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ). The work by Grint, (2003; 2008a; 2010) is of interest to this study because it denotes a departure from the focus upon individuals (as in transformational leadership) and towards people working together in response to contextualised situations. For example, Grint (2010, p9) observed that:

‘Wicked Problems are inherently political in nature not scientific or ‘rational’ and progress is likely to be via a negotiation of the common ground. For this [we] need to acquire Aristotle’s phronesis – the Wisdom to acknowledge that the situation is not like any other, combined with the experience to recognize that such Wicked Problems require a qualitatively different approach from Tame or Critical Problems.’

Indeed, according to Grint’s (2008a, p16) work, ‘Wicked’ problems do not sit within the lexicon of quantitative methods within functionalism, which proposes to measure performance by utilising ‘Tame’ interventions such as targets, metrics, risk registers or performance management controls. Nor is a ‘Critical’ response, such as replacing academics with new appointments or closing teaching programmes, likely to address an underlying ‘Wicked’ problem. Indeed, addressing a ‘Wicked’ problem as either ‘Tame’ or ‘Critical’ might even exacerbate matters. If this is occurring in the case studies, then respondents could surface it. For example, if they were not consulted regarding what was to be done to address problems in their business school. Conversely, it is also possible that respondents in management roles who implement the interventions may view the outcomes more positively than their colleagues (Mordechai, 2009). This does not preclude the possibility that in some situations elements of a ‘Wicked’ problem might be addressed by employing new personnel,

or through the introduction of innovative new teaching programmes. It will therefore be of interest to this thesis to hear what respondents have to share regarding the interventions that they have experienced in their organisations.

The respondents are unlikely to articulate their experiences of interventions with the terms ‘Critical,’ ‘Tame’ or ‘Wicked.’ However, they could share their perceptions as to whether the interventions they recount were taken unilaterally by senior management to initiate major structural or staffing changes, or if each situation appears to be addressed with new metrics, targets or measurements, or if the wider community are engaged in consultations (Bolden *et al* 2014). Conversely, this does not devalue the use of ‘Tame’ or ‘Critical’ interventions to match ‘Tame’ or ‘Critical’ problems.

‘The ‘we’ in this is important because it signifies the importance of the collective in addressing Wicked Problems. Tame problems might have individual solutions in the sense that an individual is likely to know how to deal with it. But since Wicked Problems are partly defined by the absence of an answer on the part of the leader then it behoves the individual leader to engage the collective in an attempt to come to terms with the problem. In other words, Wicked Problems require the transfer of authority from individual to collective because only collective engagement can hope to address the problem. The uncertainty involved in Wicked Problems imply that leadership, as I am defining it, is not a science but an art – the art of engaging a community in facing up to complex collective problems (Grint, 2010, p2).

Hence, a person in a leadership role would need to be sufficiently adaptive and interested in engaging with colleagues collectively to resolve ‘Wicked’ problems. However, if a person has a preferred leadership approach, they may, albeit inadvertently, misinterpret the typology of

the problem to suit their preferred leadership or problem solving approach. For example, a person whose personal capabilities tend to predispose them towards giving forthright directives may respond to Grint's (2008a, p. 16) '*wicked*' situation with a Critical intervention, whilst the more bureaucratically inclined leader may seek to tame a '*wicked*' situation through further controls, targets and reporting procedures.

This research focuses on leadership, whether or not it is distributed, and the perceptions of both management and non-management post holders Bolden *et al* (2008). It is also important to be cognisant that, in a university context, leader and follower roles often interchange according to the particular situation. This is evident in the work of (Anderson *et al*, 2005; Bush 2010; Kok *et al* 2010).

A paper by Bolden *et al*, (2009) raised provocative questions regarding the extent to which followers in university contexts are included in decision-making processes. In an example of this, the paper surfaced some challenging insights about the extent to which lecturers were consulted by those in management roles within their case-studied universities, which included both research-based universities and members of the newer former polytechnic post-1992 group. The paper found, in contrast to some of the current enthusiasm optimism even regarding progressive distributive leadership and the organisational rhetoric of inclusiveness, that decision-making in their case studied universities tended to remain the retained prerogative of the formal leadership members (Bolden *et al*, 2009).

If, as some of the literature implies, there is a theory / practice gap as perceived by lecturers and other non-management staff, then new research would offer some useful evidence to refine our critical appraisal of applied leadership and followership theory within knowledge-based environments, where the leader and follower positions are less defined than in more formal organisational structures. It will therefore be for the research to observe if respondents view followership as an esoteric and rhetorical ideal, or whether this is their experienced reality of leadership and followership in post-1992 universities (Brookes, 2007; English, 2002).

In common with the patterns of long established bureaucracies in other environments, the post-1992 university bureaucracies can prevent changes occurring by the use of reporting and control systems whilst: *'placing their [own] performance above reproach, holding subordinates accountable for results,'* (Gunn, 1995, p.28-40). Consequently, those who are in positions of responsibility can decide whether or not to consult collegiately, or resist suggestions for change, either by inertia, or deliberate obstruction. This is relevant here because, in times of rapid change, it has been observed that bureaucracy and managerial control may have functional limitations and structural tendencies to impede progress (Bush, 2010; Terry, 1998). This matter can be illuminated in the research by giving voice to followers as well as leaders in the researched cases. It may thereby be possible to evaluate how followership might be expressed in contexts where aspects of the work require compliance to prescriptive regulations, imposed either internally or through external regulators (Giddens, 1991).

There is consequently a possibility that this research may find that both followership and leadership are less prevalent in post-1992 universities than in more research-focused higher education establishments as reported by Kok *et al*, (2010). This may be because of the organisational traditions that have shaped the cultural norms of what it is to be a leader or follower in a context of managerial control (Osborn *et al*, 2002; Porter and McLaughlin, 2006). Furthermore, the expression of leadership and followership could be impeded if the environment was such that: *'managers in business and in public agencies do not have followers...managers have subordinates'* (Andersen, 2006, p11). By contrast, the work of Chu (2006) indicated that to bring about meaningful changes in a university it was essential engage the active participation of a broad range of colleagues. This builds upon the work of Bush (1999, p239-252) who found that both a *'clear vision'* and the ability to achieve implementation were crucial to successful change plans. A successful organisational community therefore requires proactive followers (Agranoff and McGuire, 2003). Grint (2005c) described this as constructive dissent:

'Clearly the provision of honest and timely advice to leaders – Constructive Dissent – provides an appropriate solution but it is equally clear, first that leaders tend to discourage this by recruiting and appointing subordinates that are 'more aligned with the official line' – that usually means sycophants and 'Yes People' who provide Destructive Consent,' (Grint, 2005c, p. 42).

The literature thereby indicates that without engaged and proactive followership leaders might receive either poor critical analysis, or none at all from their disaffected colleagues

(Grint, 2005c; Jones, 2014). Alternatively, a managerial approach may prevail by compelling others to acquiesce through the imposition of targets, controls and regulations collectively described as micromanagement (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). This kind of leadership is also likely to meet with difficulties, particularly in complex organisations such as universities. For example, according to the work of Hogan and Hogan (2002, p. 91-100), who have written extensively on leadership failure, based on a review of the work of others as well as their own research, a major contributor to leader failure is an inability to understand other people's perspectives.

The place of followers therefore requires further investigation and consideration regarding its function as part of, not subordinate to, what might be described as a leadership process. Hence, one leader is unlikely to transform a complex organisation such as a university (Bolden *et al*, 2011). The alternative might be for a more adaptive approach to leadership, which acknowledges the expertise and talents of the wider academic community and approaches leading as a collective, distributed process (Anderson *et al*, 2005; Lord and Brown, 2004; Yammarino and Dansereau, 2008).

Within the context of university business schools, where expertise in leadership and strategic planning is available, there could be significant benefits to tapping into the talent pool of that wider community's knowledge and experience. According to Bjugstad *et al*, (2006, p 304-319) there is a symbiotic relationship between leaders and followers: '*Without the eyes, ears, minds, and hearts of followers, leaders cannot function effectively.*' This poses some

interesting questions about how leadership functions, raising the importance of follower participation, rather than the predominantly leader focused approaches represented by the work of Bass and Avolio (1990), Burns (2003), Dulewicz (1995); Goleman *et al*, (2002).

A report by the Commission on the Future of Management and Leadership (2014), which investigated leadership in the UK identified one of the major challenges for organisations is to develop talent by retaining people and building leaders from within the organisations.

The extent to which followers trust their leaders influences how plans and strategies are progressed. The significance of the follower / leader relationship was articulated in the keynote speech to the Leadership Academy for South East England by Collinson (2006) when he said that the key barriers to trust between leaders and followers were: *'Follower insecurity, both economic and symbolic, leader inconsistencies between words and actions, leader distance'* (The words were noted by this researcher, who was in the audience).

This is relevant to the research because the adverse changes to the economic environment, discussed in the introductory chapter, are likely to offer new challenges for leaders in both retaining or building the personal trust of colleagues (Bush, 1999; Chu 2006; Goffee and Jones, 2001). Furthermore, the research by Lichtenstein *et al* (2007) indicated that leadership has to be in harmony with the organisational context, retaining the coherence of planned objectives through consensual agreement with colleagues. This is also supported by the work of Henkel (2005) and Jansen *et al*, (2007), who studied academic behaviour in changing policy environments. These perspectives are particularly germane in the present times (2015

at the time of writing) of transformational change in higher education.

The post-1992 university business school context therefore offers an interesting mixture of people with high levels of organisational theory knowledge, within a traditionally bureaucratic culture, which is being transformed by powerful forces of external change in the second decade of the twenty-first century (Bargh *et al*, 2000; Chu 2006; Pratt, 1997). In such circumstances, what leadership does and how it is perceived, and who is included in the process, is of interest to the study of leadership. In Greenleaf and Spears (2002) the case is argued for growing people through acceptance and valuing of diversity. This reflects an acknowledgement that followers are part of the process of leadership and is particularly pertinent to knowledge-based environments, such as universities, where the expertise in the organisation's community is a valuable resource. However Greenleaf *et al*, (2003) also criticised the university community for its slowness in adopting changes to leadership and for retaining bureaucratic management controls. Both these issues have been identified as areas for further critical evaluation from the literature: *'Universities have done a great deal of tinkering with the fringes, but the core, the medieval tradition has hardly been touched. Universities need more servant leaders to bring about that change through benign not non-coercive means.'* (Greenleaf *et al*, 2003, p.163). Whether there are challenges, some may argue opportunities, to separate academia from dependence upon the public purse and the consequential regulatory control which deems to decide what research should be funded and what should be taught and how it should be taught is for those in leadership and followership to decide.

2.4. Chapter Summary

The first section of the two-part literature discussion has investigated the potential application of transformational leadership in an environment where the majority, if not all, post-1992 university business schools can expect to experience major transformations to their funding provision and status in an increasingly competitive higher education sector. In times of significant change, the credo of theoretical transformational leadership theory – that a person whose character, as defined by the ‘Four “T”s’ of the MLQ test (Bass and Avolio, 1990), can deliver transformational leadership – is an interesting theoretical proposition. Yet in studying the literature, questions surfaced regarding the application of transformational leadership into the organisational structures of a post-1992 university business school, where leader follower positions can be interchangeable according to particular roles and workplace situations. For example, in a complex knowledge-based environment, such as a university, it is probable that individuals might serve as both leaders and followers in different circumstances.

The chapter also studied models, which focused upon critical situations and organizational contexts. For example the ‘*typology of problems, power and authority*’ by Grint (2008a, p16), provided the possibility of focusing on problem identification, namely, ‘*critical*’, ‘*tame*’ and ‘*wicked*’. The model described by Grint (2008a) is helpful to the discussion because it places the locus of attention upon the contextualised situation, rather the personal characteristics and interventions of the leader. However, there is also the possibility that leaders might have a predisposition to a particular approach, or default to interpretations based on past experiences

of successes in one style of leadership. For example, a leader who has built a career by methodically managing the business school's bureaucracy might address a *wicked* situation with a *tame* methodology. Such possibilities could become more likely in times when leader follower stresses were high due to funding cuts, redundancies and emerging crises (Bargh *et al*, 2000; Koen and Bitzer, 2010).

3. Literature Review 2: Leadership in Higher Education

3.1. Introduction to Leadership in Higher Education

This chapter of the literature review evaluates the research on leadership which has focused on educational institutions and applies the discussion to this study's particular area of research investigation; the post-1992 university business schools.

A diverse range of institutions, in both the public and private sectors, deliver the provision of higher education in the United Kingdom. Each institution has its own situation-specific heritage, market strategy and mission. Hence, the study of leadership in each institution requires cognisance of the particular mission, organisational heritage and culture, so that a contextualised critical evaluation of the espoused leadership and actual leadership and followership practices might be constructed (Porter and McLaughlin, 2006).

The post-1992 university business schools are thereby in a competitive sector with a multiplicity of providers, public and private, and some may be better equipped than others to adapt their strategies to the changing HE student environment. However, some of the the post-1992 universities have retained an adherence to bureaucratic leadership styles, which constrains the initiation and implementation of changes to their practices and provision (Gronn and Lacey, 2006).

Hence, in this section it is relevant to evaluate the extent to which distributed leadership theory might serve the post-1992 university business school leadership requirements in the twenty-first century post-credit-crunch environment (Brunnermeier, 2008; Henkel, 2005; Jones 2014; Thain, 2009).

In the subsequent chapters, both transformational leadership and followership will be drawn upon to evaluate the extent to which such leadership approaches might be appropriate to the leadership / followership in the aforementioned business schools (Anderson *et al*, 2005; Bass, 1999; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Collinson 2014; Collinson, 2007; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991; Grint 2005a). The literature on leadership and followership is briefly noted in this chapter in so much as academic papers from both the organisational leadership literature and the educational research community are complementary to this research and enrich the situation-specific discussion of leadership in a university business school context. In a later chapter, there will also be an evaluation of transformational leadership, with reference to whether an adaptation of the transformational approach might be developed to serve in an educational leadership environment.

During periods of major change, the relationships between academics, whose roles may alternate between leadership and followership according to the context, may be placed under stress, surfacing insecurities and tensions in relationships. Such interpersonal issues are pertinent to the leadership of institutions, which have experienced transforming changes, with the possibility of consequential tensions, and rifts in trust in personal relationships (Alvesson

and Sveningsson 2003; Goffee and Jones 2001; Harris, 2008). The higher education environment has, as discussed in the introductory chapter, experienced considerable change, so the possibilities and implications of such change-induced tensions will be explored in this chapter.

In a chapter that reviews educational leadership theory, it is also pertinent to consider to what extent the respondents' theoretical awareness of leadership might affect how they perceive leadership practice in their institutions (Anderson *et al*, 2005). In the particular case of the business schools, the ambient level of managerial theoretical knowledge is likely to be more commonly part of the staff discourse than might be the case in other university faculties (Allix and Gronn, 2005). This also has interesting implications for the study of possible tensions, dissonances, or synergies between knowledge of theory and practice. It is consequently relevant to observe the extent to which theoretical knowledge might be inform leadership and followership behaviours. Furthermore, this chapter explores what distributed leadership could contribute to post-1992 university business schools (Bolden *et al*, 2009; Gronn 2000; Jones 2014; Spillane 2006; Woods *et al*, 2004).

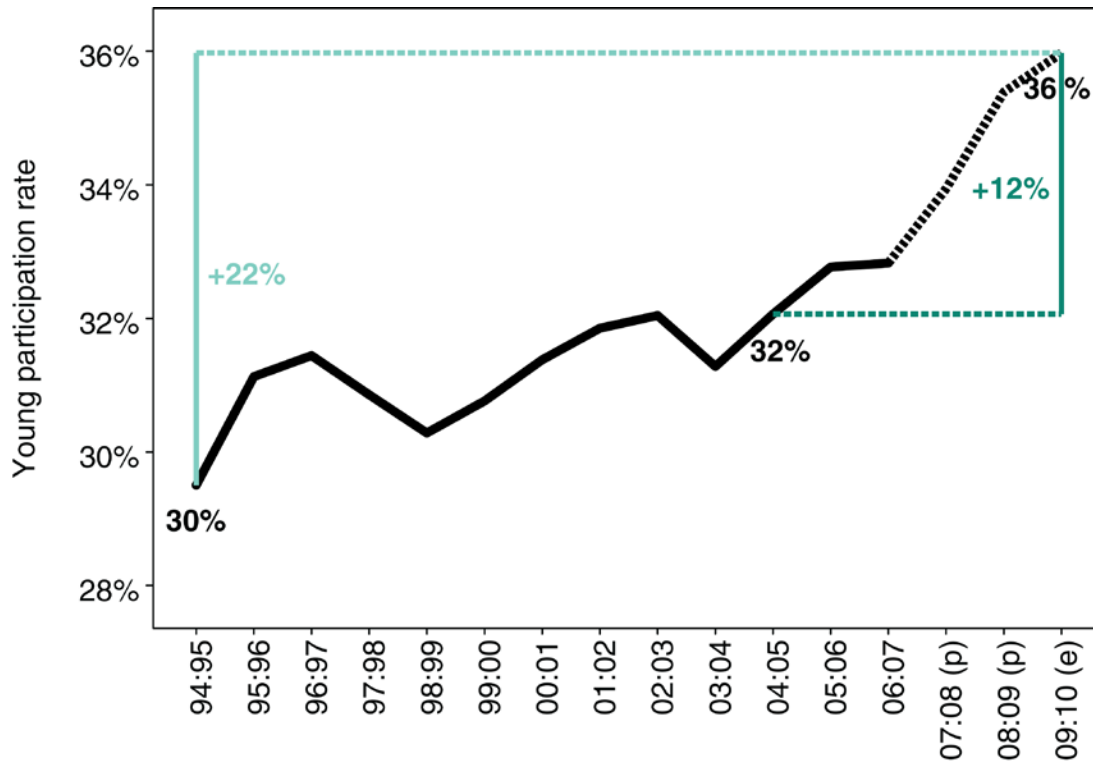
3.2. Bureaucratic Leadership in a Transforming Context

Bureaucratic administrative structures have implications for leadership within the post-1992 universities. The newer universities inherited the bureaucratic procedures from their polytechnic origins (Handy, 1985; Pratt, 1997; Reynolds, 1999). This consequently has

relevance to this research with regard to how it might constrain or empower leadership initiatives. This section therefore explores the potential influence of that bureaucratic organisational context upon leadership (Osborn *et al*, 2002; Woods *et al*, 2005; Winter 2009).

The post-1992 university group, which was granted its university charter in 1992, consisted of the former polytechnics. Whilst, self-evidently, this group is referred to generically as the post-1992 University group, the constituent universities also have regional and organisationally specific differences in their missions and objectives (Pratt, 1997). Within the post-1992 university group, the business schools have experienced some rapid expansion of student participation in the 1990s, followed by the reappraisal and reduction of funding, as a consequence of the economic crisis of the late 2000s (Dearing Report, 1997; Morgan and Newman, 2010; Petrov *et al*, 2007). The figure 4 below illustrates the rapid change in student participation rates, taken from the HEFCE statistical report, January 2010. The expansion was stimulated by the policies of the former Labour government, which, in 1997, set a target to have fifty per cent of school leavers attending some form of higher education. However, the later dotted line projections for 2009 and 2010 onward indicated that the Higher Education sector was likely to experience some reductions to student participation. The move from an expansionist approach to higher education to one of funding contraction has impacted on some HE providers due to the reductions in the number of HEFCE-funded student places (Hefce Report 2014).

Fig 4 Trends in participation in Higher Education for England



The higher education environment has therefore already experienced transformational changes and, in the coming decade, it is likely to have a reversal of financial fortunes with respect to state funding. These developments have led to some animated, even acrimonious, discussions regarding the purpose of higher education, during the past decade (Bridges, 2000; Bush, 1999; Giroux, 2003). Consequently, contemporary universities have had to adapt to a spectrum of transformations, including the rapid growth in student numbers during the 1990s, followed by the planned reduction of government funding in the late 2000s resulting from the economic downturn, described as the 'credit crunch' (Brunnermeier, 2008; Henkel, 2005; Thain, 2009).

These events are likely to generate tensions in post 1992s where they have retained a tendency to address situations with bureaucratic procedural conformity, which may have been sufficient to manage the years of growth in the 1990s, but may be insufficiently adaptive for the challenges of the coming decade (Grint 2008a; Clarke and Butcher 2009).

3.3. Bureaucracy and Leadership in Post-1992 Business Schools

One of the elements, which will provide evidence for the research, is the bureaucratic context within which business school leadership has to work. The context is relevant because it can influence and potentially constrain or empower particular leadership initiatives. In the case of the post-1992 university business schools, the organisational environment in which they have operated has historically tended to be, with local variations, more administratively bureaucratic than the more collegiate, academically research led universities. To study leadership in this group of universities, it is consequently useful for the research to be cognisant of the administrative bureaucracy and the plethora of data and information which is generated by many contemporary post-1992 university business schools. This is relevant to the study because the administrative context influences leadership choices and patterns of leader / follower behaviour (Henkel, 2005; Reynolds, 1999).

It is a legitimate area for educationalists to evaluate the weighting of importance they should give to the strictures of governmental and other quality assurance agencies. Indeed, at a time when the state is planning to reduce its financial support to the higher education sector, it

may be appropriate to reflect upon what proportion of staff resources in time as well as institutional costs, should be spent on reporting procedures to government and governmental bodies. A re-evaluation of areas of priority would necessitate leader / follower engagement and reflectivity as to the choices each institution might consider. As a consequence, there are likely to be adjacent internal leader / follower tensions with regard to the balance of prioritisation. Hence both external and internal forces may place pressure on the more bureaucratic post-1992 universities' organisational structures and their capacity or perhaps more relevantly the willingness to adapt and change in a transforming environment (McNay, 1995).

Furthermore, whilst administrative and quality assurance processes require attention, the degree to which the leadership distributes decisions or micro-manages, perhaps under the guise of compliance to external requirements, is also a leadership choice with implications for what work receives the investment of time (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003; Deem, 1998; Harris, 2008; Newman, 2002). These questions matter here and may arguably be at the heart of what it might mean to be a leader / follower in a business school environment, because the direction of leadership attention is likely to indicate what kinds of work are esteemed in a particular post-1992 university business school.

Questions regarding what is esteemed in a particular institution also require evaluation in a study of leadership. For it might also transpire that what is esteemed by the institution might not, necessarily, be what individual academics esteem or what is regarded externally as

valuable to their careers. For example, in the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education's website (accessed 23rd April 2010) the vision statement asserts the aspiration that:

'Excellence in leadership in higher education should attract the same esteem as excellence in research, teaching and learning.'

It is relevant to this study that their vision states, *'should attract the same esteem'* because if the Leadership Foundation had found in their interactions with universities that leadership already received parity of esteem with other university activities, it would not have needed to offer such a forthright vision statement asserting that leadership should have similar esteem to other academic activities (Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, April 2010).

Arising from the place of leadership in universities and the esteem attached to it is the question of how to achieve scholarly activity and departmental administration. For example, a possible redistribution of workloads is probably more likely to flourish in an organisational climate where distributed leadership discussion has reflected upon and shaped where the priorities for staff time investment should be (Spillane, 2006; Woods *et al*, 2004). Hence, a balance between administration, consultancy, marketing, research and teaching could coalesce to serve the collective and particular interests of all the stakeholders, providing that a balance could be designed in such a way as to serve both the needs of the participants as well as the university's strategic objectives. Conversely, the ascendancy of one constituency – in alphabetical order, administration, consultancy, marketing, research, and teaching – over the others may disadvantage or stymie the overall success of the business school.

Furthermore, in reality, the constituents are co-dependents in a single community and are consequently all in part responsible for what happens to their community of scholars and students (Densten and Gray, 2001).

An alternative approach to leading in a complex higher education environment could be to build a tripartite faculty, which contained people with differing primary focuses, such as college management, research and teaching. Empowerment might release individual potential to focus on areas of personal interest and expertise (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991; Henkel, 2005; Newman, 2002). Within such a restructured faculty it could be possible to replace the current and somewhat unbalanced requirement in some post 1992 universities which requires academics should be skilled in a multiplicity of knowledge and activities ranging from management to teaching and research. An alternative might surface from a consensual re-evaluation of workloads and activities based upon constructive engagement with commitment to change (Turnbull and Edwards, 2005). Even so, it might be challenging for such a re-distribution of labour to flourish, or for colleagues to agree that each of these activities – college management, research and teaching – have parity of esteem. Given that the current status quo in the higher education sector tends to gift research work with more status than other activities. The extent to whether or not this is the perception of respondents can be surfaced in the interviews within the three selected case studies.

In times of economic uncertainty in the United Kingdom and global competition for students, at the time of writing in 2015, it would also seem sensible for the universities to reflect upon

how to become more responsive to the external changes in the national and international competition for higher education (Marginson, 2006; Maringe, 2005; Thain, 2009). Indeed, the processes of changes are continuous, particularly in an economic environment where it has been predicted that the funding of the higher education sector will be considerably less than has been the case in past decades (Brunnermeier, 2008; Diamond and Rajan, 2005; Newman, 2010). The changes in governmental funding and increased competition for students from both international providers and the entrance of new private sector universities in the United Kingdom should be of particular concern to the mid to lower Times Higher ranked post-1992 university business schools, which have traditionally been more reliant upon government-funded teaching than other sections of the university community, which can generate a greater proportion of their funding from research and other grants (Griffiths and Grimston, 2010; Morgan, 2015; Willmott, 1998).

During uncertain and unpredictable times, the post-1992 universities' heritage of bureaucratic organisation might militate against their ability to respond quickly to changing circumstances because of the tendency that bureaucracy has to be more adept at repeating established organizational processes than responding to new situations (Eisenstadt, 1968; Handy, 1985; Marginson, 2006; Lewin, 1951; Nieto, 2014). As discussed earlier, within bureaucracies the processes and procedures are built into organisational checks and balances and thereby influence both strategic and operational levels of leadership. The disadvantage of bureaucracy is consequently that the processes may become the goal itself. Moreover, the business school may be generating sufficient workload to distract staff from engaging fully

with other activities and actions which might release potential to do academic work, research, teaching and consultancy that adds to the university's learning environment.

Whereas the bureaucratic audits may, if conducted with research robustness and subject to the criteria selected, provide a valid and reliable measure of past performance, the data may not be pertinent to the current local, national or internationally prevailing circumstances. However, the same bureaucratic mechanisms may persist in applying these processes and staff might retain faith in procedures because the systems have delivered something of use in the past (Sternberg, 1981). Indeed, if an organisation can justify its performance according to the existing criteria, there could be less incentive to challenge the *status quo* by reviewing the forces for change, which are likely to have emerged from outside the existing regulatory and bureaucratic framework (Eisenstadt, 1968; Lewin, 1951; McNay, 1995; Nieto 2014).

It is consequently relevant to question what information is being gathered by post-1992 university business school administrations and how it is relevant (if at all), and informing organisational decisions. Is the information reliable and valid for the evidence it seeks to establish? Even if the university internal audits are fit for purpose, do they ask the right questions? Is the preponderance of auditing focused on quantitative measures, unsupported by further in-depth investigations? The proposition is that such studies may offer a misleading account of reality. It is also possible that there is a tendency to overemphasise rationality in organisational studies, because statistics may offer the appearance of objectivity. More critically, the statistical measures may not surface all of the empirical

reality, which could be pertinent to the formation of leader decision formation (Albrow, 1997, p. 105). For example Erickson (2010) has asked the community of scholars for more critical discussion and challenged the hegemony of audits pursuing more effectiveness, efficiency and quality, in the absence of a debate about what academic leaders might mean when they ask for these to be increased.

If academics uncritically accept the data from audits they might be functioning in a world of '*false consciousness*,' whereby what is believed to be true is not necessarily so (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008, p. 128). It is also possible that during uncertain times of change the comfort of the known procedures might be, for some, possibly unconsciously, easier to accept than an alternative and robust re-evaluation of what it might mean to be a twenty-first century, post-credit crunch, post-1992 University business school (Brunnermeier, 2008). Hence, some members of business schools may live in: '*constructions of reality that at best given an imperfect grasp*' of their environment, a '*psychic prison*' formed by an internally constructed and accepted reality (Morgan, 1997, p. 215-216). It is consequently useful to evaluate these possibilities within new research that contains both observations of senior managers and perceptions of followership as articulated by academics. In such a study it is more likely that some critical evaluations of realities, rhetoric of what is happening in their business school may be surfaced because the qualitative methodology employed for this research is designed to give voice to respondents' perceptions of reality. For example, the research conducted by Cartwright (2007) studied academic perceptions in two post 1992 universities regarding reality versus the rhetoric in teaching quality.

In a time of change in higher education, it is probable that those post-1992 universities, which are more adept at modifying their strategies, may be able to redirect their resources towards emerging markets in response to the altered British funding situation (Bush, 1999; Connolly, 2003; Griffiths and Grimston, 2010; Huang, 2008). Perhaps understandably in an insecure employment environment, a safety first, risk-averse approach to decision making may have a tendency to preclude innovation and retain the apparent security of known procedures and practices. The research into leadership and administration in universities by Gunn (1995) identified evidence of what he considered to be outmoded adherences to bureaucracy by university institutions, which actively constrained change being implemented. The paper argued that the university bureaucracies prevented changes occurring by using the systems for quality control and productivity to hold lecturers and middle managers to account *'placing their [own] performance above reproach while holding subordinates accountable for results,'* (Gunn, 1995, pp. 28-40). The research by Gunn (1995) is useful to this study because it raises questions as to the purpose and use of accountability, with reference to how leaders conduct themselves. Furthermore, it addresses the question as to whether distributed leadership could, in practice, be allowed to flourish in a bureaucratically controlled, performance-audited environment (Spillane *et al*, 2004; Spillane, 2006). If, as Gunn's paper (1995) identified, the bureaucratic tendencies of the administrative and leadership hierarchy tend to disallow critical evaluation of their own performance, then distributed leadership may be hampered, particularly if the status quo and bureaucratic procedures discourage *'Constructive Dissent'* (Grint 2005, p. 42).

The literature provided further indications that the university community's slowness to adopt change is due, at least to some extent, to the persistence of established bureaucratic practices and long established traditions of custom and practice (Greenleaf *et al*, 2003; Kärreman *et al*, 2002). The concept of the leader as servant to the community can be helpful in viewing the community of scholars, students and administration more holistically and with the purpose of seeking common well-being. The research by Bareham (2004, p.25) placed significance upon relationships in academia, whereby the development of trust relationships is crucial to the establishment of agreement as to the purpose of the business school. The paper went further to argue that *trust* is a prerequisite to bring about change in academic environments, in which Bareham listed four key areas:

'Credibility, trust, management expertise and people management' (Bareham, 2004, p.26).

It is probable that significant levels of trust are less likely to flourish in overly controlling bureaucratically hierarchical leadership cultures. Whilst the tendencies of the auditing cultures are quantitative, inductive streams of enquiry could be more helpful to ascertain some sense of the trust, which people may feel towards their organisation. For example, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) found that organisational life and consequently management decisions co-exist with: *'Ambiguity...that is persistent and cannot be significantly reduced through more information.'* (p. 978). Hence, the proliferation of student evaluations, staff performance indicators, research assessments, internal quality standard reviews, external quality visits, unit evaluations, annual programme reports, staff competencies assessments and 360 degree peer reviews may circulate in a business school,

but generate more email and documentary heat than any critically evaluative light. These control systems may actually diminish trust amongst colleagues and thereby may even be detrimental to the objectives they purport to serve (O'Neill, 2002). Of course, control systems are present and applied to a greater or lesser extent in all universities. Indeed, in a post 1992 university all of its various discipline areas will be subject to the same processes and procedures. It will thereby be interesting to study how respondents' within the business discipline report their perceptions of such controls and reporting procedures.

3.4. Power and Conflict in Business School Leadership

The literature on knowledge intensive environments articulates how complex organisations can be challenging places to work in (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). A university department is, in common with other organisational situations, likely to experience internal and external forces for change (Lewin, 1951; Turnbull and Edwards, 2005; Nieto, 2014). Also, there may be tensions in interpersonal interactions between leaders and followers, arising from a multiplicity of issues including interpersonal relationship tensions and possibly intrusive micromanagement. Further tensions may arise from both inside the business school and or from the university hierarchy, as well as possible priority ambiguities and personal insecurities produced by changes in governmental funding policies, (Alvesson, and Sveningsson, 2003; Henkel, 2005).

These issues are also expounded in a paper by Bolden *et al*, (2008a, p.373), where the authors offer the perspective that leadership in complex organizations, such as universities, serve

within '*emergent and shifting processes of social influence.*'

These shifts in patterns of influence are likely to impact upon individual sense of employment security and perhaps peer esteem within the business school. Consequently, the individual and collective impact of such shifts in social influence and esteem are likely to affect what leadership and followership can achieve in a particular organisational context (Collinson, 2007). For the post-1992 universities, internal tensions might be exacerbated by changes such as modifications to research assessments, which might focus a larger proportion of funding with the research-intensive universities, and the continuing impact of teaching quality assessments and administrative accounting requirements. When these factors are considered in conjunction with possible role ambiguities, disruptions and unanticipated changes, any of the aforementioned factors for change may blur an institution's clarity of mission and purpose and erode mutual trust to cooperate with the leadership (McNay, 1995; Newman, 2002).

The research into higher education by Bolden *et al*, (2008b) studied a cross section of universities in England, Wales and Scotland. The paper provided research evidence via semi-structured face-to-face interviews within universities, and included academic staff from several different departments. The paper thereby provided a valuable and broad-ranging study and demonstrated that UK higher education is experiencing a continuing period of significant transformation. This is an on going process which generates allied challenges, tensions and pressures for leadership and followership in the higher education sector. The

questions that were outlined for that research have provided a study with some potentially useful lines for further research. These were:

- *Why are some people are regarded as ‘leaders’ rather than others?*
- *What is it that enables certain people with limited formal authority to exert considerable influence, while others remain relatively powerless despite holding a formal role?*
- *How is leadership experienced by those involved as it unfolds?*
- *How is personal agency constrained and/or enhanced through access to and control of resources and other sources of power?* (Bolden *et al*, 2008b, p.362).

The research by Bolden, Petrov and Gosling (2008b) articulated many relevant observations on the university sector. The paper included respondents from nine pre-1992 and three post-1992 universities. It also listed respondents including a range of academic and administrative leaders, though not lecturers. Whilst the paper asserted the significance of followers in the discussion of leadership, the people interviewed for the research were in senior leadership and middle management positions. It is consequently constructive to build upon the subsequent work of Bolden *et al* (2012) by further focusing on leadership and followership in the post-1992 university business school context. Moreover, to add to the current knowledge by researching the ambiguities of sometimes being a leader, sometimes a follower and to surface the potential incongruities and dissonances in these different roles within a learning knowledge environment in which the ambient awareness of leadership theory is more prevalent than in other university faculties.

The basis for decisions also needs to be cognisant of the local context (Osborn *et al*, 2002). Thereby whatever constitutes an agreed approach is likely to vary according to local centres of expertise and opportunities for building the business school's relationships, both internally and with their local community. Hence, both the knowledge of local issues and opportunities thereby available can provide an informed sense of where and how to deploy the knowledge and skills available in a particular business school. As such, there is an opportunity for more context-focused research into one segment of higher education providers, which also collects leader observations from followers. The research by Bolden *et al*, (2008b) into both pre-1992 and three post-1992 universities was however useful as a review of two providers within the higher education sector. However, the differences in situation between the research-led traditional universities and the post-1992 institutions are too broad for a comparative critical evaluation of leaders and followers because – and this is crucial – the contexts in which they function are very different because the research led universities are not a dependent for their income on student numbers than the more teaching orientated post 1992s.

3.4.1. Practical Leadership

The university business schools have a rich source of academic knowledge upon which to draw in matters of leadership. How academic leaders and followers choose to apply their theoretical knowledge of leadership – for at times each person may be required to lead or follow – has significance for their university's organisational well-being. For this reason, the post-1992 business schools offer an instructive area of enquiry to study the extent to which,

or not, theoretical knowledge is applied in the practice to their leadership.

The business school academics come from, of course, a wide range of disciplines. However, the academics also have close access to colleagues that research areas such as leadership, human resources and organisational behaviour. Accordingly, there is an availability of information to those who are tasked with managerial responsibilities which is not as readily available in other organisations. Hence, it will be interesting to research the respondents' perceptions as to whether leadership theories are translated into operational practice (Grint, 2008a). Furthermore, it is also possible that respondents might express personal dissonances between their knowledge of leadership theories and their observations and perception of the practices of leadership.

The academic learning journey arguably ought to inform behaviour and be of service to the community of scholars in practice and well as theory: '*Education, [should promote] treating themselves and their wards in a civilized fashion*' (Waterfield, 1993, p121). Accordingly, education might be evaluated by the improved behaviour of the educated towards each other as well as towards other citizens in their community. For example, post-1992 university business schools invest considerable resources guiding students towards the practical organisational applications of management theories. If leadership theories and models are thereby presented as efficacious to practice for the wider organisational community, it would seem reasonable that they also have relevance and application to the leadership of business schools too.

Organisational self-awareness can provide a valuable contribution to the formation of policies. For Erickson (2010), educational leaders ought therefore to be asking questions inside their institutions such as:

- *What is it like to be a...?*
- *Why do social groups A and B not socialise with each other?*
- *What does 'name calling' say about what staff believe about their university?*

The questions raised by Erickson (2010) regarding how colleagues behave and interact within their university are useful to the analysis of leadership in a business school context. Hence, the collaboration or disunity of colleagues may influence what leaders can achieve and to what extent the various constituencies – administration, consultancy, marketing, research, and teaching – can and do in reality coalesce.

3.4.2. Distributed and Blended Leadership within a Bureaucratized Context

The possibility of distributing leadership responsibilities within educational organisations is a movement, which has accumulated research interest and advocates in the educational and leadership research community (Bolden *et al* 2014; Bolden *et al*, 2008a; Collinson and Collinson, 2006; Gronn, 2000; Pearce, 2004; Spillane *et al*, 2004; Woods *et al*, 2004; Yammarino and Dansereau, 2008). There are, however, potentially impediments to such a transformational change to the *status quo* of some Higher Education providers and the possibility that staff might be reluctant to accept change (Gleeson and Knights, 2008). In particular, the post-1992 universities have a long established tradition of formal bureaucratic structures. It is consequently possible that there would be some resistance to change from the formal bureaucracies, which tend to hold onto the control of resources and thereby centres of power, control and influence (Bolden, 2011; Chreim, 2014; Lumby, 2013).

It is also possible that informal resistance to distributive leadership could be expressed by academics that may not regard leadership in the sense of organising and managing, to have parity of esteem to research and teaching (Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, 2010; Cassidy, 2005; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Terry, 1998). As such, distributive leadership could also meet with resistance in research-intensive universities, as well as other institutions in the higher education sector. (Macfarlane, 2011; Petrov *et al*, 2007). Furthermore, the literature indicates that the context, culture, existing structures and the perceptions of what work is esteemed are likely to influence whether distributed leadership

may serve a particular institution (Anderson *et al*, 2005). Consequently, there is significant evidence in the literature to support distributed leadership as an approach which has its roots in the education environment and is therefore of interest to this research.

‘One of the most influential [leadership] models to be embraced within the UK education sector is ‘distributed leadership’, which now heavily informs the thinking of the National College for School Leadership, Centre for Excellence in Leadership for the post-compulsory education sector and the LFHE in the higher education sector.’ (Bolden *et al*, 2008a, p. 360)

The adoption of distributed leadership in universities might provide benefits to organisational awareness and counter the auditing narcissism that is sometimes associated with hierarchical bureaucracy. In support of this observation, Schwartz (1990) offers this critical analysis of hierarchical leadership: *‘The narcissistic loss of reality among those at the top of the corporation may be a major cause of over-centralisation of operational decision making’* (p.68). Conversely, the adoption of distributed leadership could open the possibility for more consensual, inclusive or adaptive approaches to leadership (Randell and Coakley, 2007). Furthermore, poor leadership practices may be actually be discouraging distributing leadership. For example, the research by Nicholson (2014, p. 29) indicated that:

‘Poor leadership was closely related to lack of emotional and social intelligence including resistance to distributing leadership and authority across the system.’

By contrast distributed leadership can contribute to creating an environment where people support leaders by providing, *‘Constructive Dissent,’* and avoiding the sycophantic, *‘Destructive Consent,’* (Grint, 2005c, p.42). Hence, Grint (2005c) advocates an environment where the critical exchange of constructive dissent thereby supports a culture which is more conducive to constructive engagement between colleagues in knowledge based context.

A central tenet of constructing distributed leadership is that the responsibility for leadership is lifted from the preserve of a few individuals so that the whole group takes leadership responsibility (Macfarlane, 2014; Thorpe *et al* 2011). This approach represents a paradigm shift from hierarchical bureaucracy and replaces the rigidity of formal structures with more individual, fluid formations of leadership and followership. It also represents a significant departure from the concept that leadership might be a set of personal competencies. Instead, the proponents of distributed leadership envisage a form of leadership that replaces the focus upon individuals by: '*leadership as a dynamic organisational entity*' (Harris, 2008, pp.172-188).

The HE sector is an environment which by its designated purpose of researching and teaching draws together knowledge workers. Within a knowledge-based workplace the participants usually appreciate the space to work independently, yet to also engage with fellow academics as part of a wider collaborative community (Collinson and Collinson 2006; Paauwe and Williams, 2001). Within a complex knowledge-based community, such as a university an approach to leadership which supports the facilitation of collaborative cooperation could be more in harmony with the needs and interests of the participants (Bolden *et al* 2014; Bolden *et al* 2012). Blended leadership can provide an approach which is empathetic to learning, knowledge based communities. According to Jones, *et al* (2014 p 419):

'The conceptual framework for blended leadership is premised on the notion of administrative management operating in the professional space, intellectual leadership operating in the academic space and an agreed mix of both these approaches operating

within the overlap (third space). This conceptual framework for blended leadership builds on the research outcomes of recent empirical research into a distributed leadership.'

The approach advocated by Jones, *et al* (2014) to leadership concurs with the research conducted with twenty-six respondents by Bolden *et al* (2014) which explored academics working as citizens of a community instead of the institutional roles such as employee, manager or senior manager.

Hence, questions regarding how leadership is organised, are relevant to this research because within knowledge-based organisations such as a university, it is very likely that many views will exist of what should be progressed and how it may be implemented, and alternative voices will offer different senses and interpretations of the same circumstances containing '*multiple versions of reality*,' (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008, p13). Furthermore, where a business school is being reorganised, the possibilities for instability generated by some of the transforming interventions may also change perceptions of belonging and purpose. As such there may be a heightened potential for interpersonal dissonances, arising from conflicting interests and aspirations (Boerner *et al*, 2007).

3.4.3. Distributive Realities in the Post-1992 University Context

Even with the best of intentions, the constrictions of the bureaucratic establishment may thwart distributive progress. For example, the research by Rusaw (2000, cited in Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008, p.140) into an American university was of interest here, both because the study was within a university, and the matter studied was a programme to develop more trust among colleagues. It is acknowledged that an American university is a different context to

that of this research. However, the study by Rusaw (2000) is of interest in so far as it contributes to the literature on how the reported academics in the case study responded to proposed change to encourage more trust between colleagues. According to Rusaw (2000), a development programme, which was designed to bring about higher levels of trust and fairness, failed – reportedly because the senior management perceived it to be a threat to their interests and control. This is useful knowledge because it exposed both differing perceptual realities of a seemingly constructive development and the protectionist inclinations, or insecurities, of the managers as part of an organisational reality, at least their reality, as to how much they valued trust within their community of scholars. Consequently, the research by Rusaw (2000) raises our awareness to the possibility that within a university context, even if leaders might espouse the benefits of a new approach they may not support it in practice. An alternative interpretation of their managerial perception of reality could be that the management actually valued the retention of their positional control more than the trust of their colleagues. So in their reality, it might be that trust and followership are of little value compared to acquiescence and compliance. Hence, whilst the rhetoric might be distributive leadership, the reality in action is selfish self-interest, which perpetuates the bureaucratic regulations because their enforcement defends the *status quo* of autocratic power. It is appropriate to refer to Gronn, (2006) who is an ardent proponent of distributive leadership, but has nevertheless found reasons to doubt its actual practice in higher education and questioned whether distributive leadership is an idealistic fantasy. Conversely distributive leadership may be perceived as a means of leveraging employee talents in response to the crisis in the post-1992 university finances. It is also possible that a time of budget cuts and

staff redundancies entrenches power and control with the established resource gatekeepers.

‘Distributed leadership offers a powerful post-heroic representation of leadership well suited to complex, changing and interdependent environments. The question remains, however, as to whether this represents the lived experience of leadership in HE or just an idealistic fantasy unattainable in practice?’ (Bolden *et al*, 2009, p257).

The above questions raised by Bolden *et al*, (2009) are apposite to this research. The extent to which the academic perceptions of reality perceive distributed leadership as appropriate to their complex and changing environments or as *‘unattainable in practice’* is discussed in the Findings and Analysis chapters.

It is apparent from the literature that distributed leadership (Harris, 2008) might, for some, be an aspiration, for others a potential undermining of their managerial control, or for those who are sufficiently comfortable with the *status quo*, a challenge to their established patterns of work and norms. Nicholson (2014) cautions university leaders to reflect upon their positions within the organisational context:

‘University leadership is not a personal fiefdom. As vice chancellor, senior manager, chief administrator, lecturer or union rep you are part of a system’ (2014, p29).

Whether a requirement for more consensual leadership is the sensed reality in post-1992 universities business schools will be a matter for the primary research to study and it will be useful to study where the next steps for distributive leadership might lie in terms of practical application (Gronn, 2009b).

The literature supports the efficacy of distributing leadership and leadership opportunities.

For example, according to Fuller (2013): '*The extension of leadership development opportunities would create a professional leadership community.*' (p. 36). The research plan is to study the extent to which the case-studied business schools actively support distributed leadership and promote existing staff to leadership posts. This would thereby encourage active engagement and participation and would be consistent with management development (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008). Interestingly, research into another context by Fuller *et al*, (2013) indicated that distributed leadership was not in evidence. The possible existence of a theory / practice gap is of research interest where academics in the business schools are knowledge-rich in theory. If dissonances are surfaced between the respondents' awareness of distributed leadership theories and their perceptions of reality then it will be interesting to hear how they evaluate their contextual experiences (Geertz; 1973; Ponterotto 2006).

3.5. Chapter Summary

In this section of the literature review, the study has evaluated elements of leadership research which have focused on the educational sector. The literature on leadership in education identified the benefits of distributing leadership within educational organisations. This study noted an accumulating research interest in the distributive leadership within the education and leadership research community. However, there may be potentially significant impediments to such a transformational change to the status quo of some higher education providers. For example, that some of the people who currently have managerial positions perceptions of what it is to be a leader may not embrace distributed leadership. Additionally, some academics might be reluctant to accept the responsibilities of followership.

Furthermore, the resilient nature of both established centres of individual power, supported by long established bureaucratic hierarchies and reporting systems, might impede the fruition of distributive leadership. The cultural values in academia, which tend to esteem research more than leadership, may also concurrently discourage leadership as a career pathway.

4. Philosophical Perspectives underpinning the Research

4.1. Introduction

This part of the thesis considers the philosophical underpinning of the research and how it has influenced the methodological choices, which are discussed later. The philosophical underpinning for this thesis has evolved through an iterative process, which has benefited from reviewing the literature and various approaches to research design (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000; Johnson and Duberley, 2003). This section of the thesis considers the philosophical underpinning of the research with reference to the question which has evolved through an iterative process of reviewing, reflection and adaptations:

‘What does Leadership and Followership mean in a Post-1992 University Business School?’

Furthermore, I reflect upon my own position as a researcher and senior manager in higher education, in relation to this research (Finlay, 2002; Hertz, 1997; Orr and Bennett, 2009).

4.2. Reflexivity

Accordingly, in this section, I would like to include my interest in the subject matter, personal higher education experience and my feelings and stance, having worked in the higher education sector for many years (Etherington, 2004). I moved into academia following a career in organisational management and consultancy. At the time of writing, I am employed as a senior business faculty head of programmes in a university. The role is to lead

the Faculty's programmes. This is facilitated via ten programme directors in my reporting management group, together with their deputies and pathway leaders. In this decade my employment experience is in the private university sector. Prior to this time I have also enjoyed a number of positions in both the private sector higher education and state universities.

I am a Chief External Examiner for two universities, one of which is in the private sector, one in the state sector. I have conducted research into management in organisations and published three management texts and contributed to a chapter in fourth text. My current textbook was commissioned Palgrave Mcmillan, focuses on the area of human resource management and was published at the end to 2014. I have thereby enjoyed the opportunities to take up leadership posts, conduct research for book publications and this PhD thesis.

Accordingly, my personal experiences of leadership and personal career development in the HE sector have predisposed me to have positive perceptions about leadership, personal development and the career opportunities available. To be specific, I have been enriched as a person by working with and being led and guided by some very capable people. This includes the areas of research, academic administration and leadership in a community of scholars wherein followership and leadership are often interchangeable.

Indeed, the opportunities I have been given to learn and develop my experiences have placed me in a position to be invited to take part in interesting projects, both within universities, as

an employee and externally with the government and professional chartered bodies. To be specific, I am currently a member of the university's: Faculty Executive Committee; The University Senate; Faculty Research Committee; Senate Academic Development Committee; Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee; Performance and Rewards Committee; Student Academic Affairs Committee. Externally, in addition to my work as a chief external examiner, I have been invited to participate with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Management. This group researches leadership in British organisations. I am also an invited member of the CIPD Leaders in Education group and an advisor to the London South branch and currently a Higher Education Ambassador for CMI.

Conversely, I am conscious of the possibility that the respondents' perceptions of their reality might differ from my own experiences. For example, in two of the cases selected there have been several changes of Dean, so this may influence the respondents' perceptions on areas such as the stability of leadership and followership relationships. My personal view is that a person who has a role of responsibility should reflect upon the impact their decisions have on the careers of other people around them, both colleagues and students. However, if the respondents articulate perspectives, which differ to my own views and personal experiences, the posture of the researcher is to report what respondents' have said in the findings chapter (Johnson and Duberley, 2003). The subsequent discussion chapter is thereby formed by reflecting on what respondents' have shared in a comparative analysis of the selected leadership theories discussed in the literature review (Finlay, 2002; Orr and Bennett, 2009).

I am cognisant that as a researcher I selected the epistemology and in selecting to focus on particular literatures by definition meant excluding others too. Each researcher brings their knowledge and life experiences into their research. In my case that experience has enabled me to appreciate the respondents' context and recognise that there are different perceptions of reality, when respondents' report on their experiences of leadership and followership (Mordechai, 2009).

This approach to research follows what Patton (2002 p. 64) identified as: '*an on-going examination of what I am and how I know it*'. Accordingly, Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008, p. 13) have commented that researchers need to reflect upon their epistemological choices to establish: '*what does and what does not constitute knowledge*'. Hence the research has been formed through a reflexive evolution, considering the researcher's beliefs as to what leadership and followership might be and what area of knowledge is to be focused upon. This follows the approach which was articulated by Mingers (2003, p. 559) who observed that research contains:

'Philosophical assumptions covering, ontology (what is assumed to exist), epistemology (the nature of valid knowledge).'

The initial research plan, which was constructed with another university, was formed within the functionalist discourse, whereby the study would have sought to construct frameworks through which leaders could: '*build skills and knowledge to address performance gaps and optimize resources*' (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008 p. 22). This initial approach to the research was prompted by a professional interest, as described earlier in this section. Thereby

looking for leadership actions to address the changes in post 1992 business schools which were discussed in the introductory chapter (Hefce Report, 2014; HEFCE Report, 2010; Keleman and Bansal 2002).

The experience of being a researcher and meeting academics has benefited my practice by experiencing respondents' perceptions of their reality which have been different to my own. Furthermore, my felt perception of the interviews was that the respondents were much more open in what they said to me because they felt the confidence of anonymity to share thoughts with a researcher, yet someone who also understands their contextual environment. For example, in other universities where I meet academics in my roles as a chief external examiner or as a senior academic manager, quite understandably, people do not share their thoughts as openly as the respondents in this research.

The early philosophical position of the research thereby gravitated towards a functionalist approach, similar to that of exponents of contemporary transformational leadership theory such as (Alimo-Metcalfe *et al*, 2001; Bass and Avolio 1994; Bass and Riggio 2008; Goleman *et al*, 2002; Vecchio *et al*, 2008). The current research has therefore benefited from studying the significant contributions to transformational leadership theory which have emerged from researchers who have approached the study of leaders from a positivistic perspective. This perspective maintains that an objective reality does exist and therefore leadership can be measured as a quantifiable set of characteristics (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe 2001; Goleman *et al*, 2002; Vecchio *et al*, 2008). Hence, some elements of the leadership theories,

which have informed the preparation of this study, were based upon positivist epistemology and ontology.

However, the research journey stimulated me to question and reflect upon the complex knowledge based environments and the possibility for multiple perceptions of reality in constructivism (Finlay, 2002; Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008; Mordechai, 2009; Patton 2002). Hence, to reflect upon the research by: '*an on-going examination of what I am and how I know it*' (Patton, 2002 p.64). Accordingly, reflecting on my choices, the combination of literatures from the business and education disciplines has provided distinct, though complimentary perspectives of leadership and followership. In so doing, I have explored different literatures, benefitted from the cross-disciplinary reading and thereby enriched my personal learning journey (Hardy, *et al* 2001).

4.3. Research questions

In considering various approaches to the research the following research questions emerged to include investigation of transformational leadership, followership and distributed leadership. These were as follows:

- *Within a transforming environment for post-1992 business schools what part, if any, does transformational leadership contribute?*
- *What is the role of followers in a post-1992 business school context?*
- *'To explore perceptions of reality or rhetoric of distributed leadership.'*

4.4. The Philosophical Approach

A formative part of the evolution of the research questions was the study of additional literature from the educational research discipline as well as other approaches to leadership, which employed qualitative methodologies such as (Anderson *et al*, 2005; Boerner *et al*, 2007; Bolden *et al*, 2009; Brookes 2007; Brookes and Grint 2010; Burgoyne and James 2006; Collinson 2006; Grint 2005a; Grint 2005b; Gronn 2009b; Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008; Peck and Dickinson 2009; Thody 2003). As a consequence of that additional reading, the chapter on educational literature served as a catalyst to re-evaluate the original ontology and epistemology of the research. Whilst this research appreciates the contribution to knowledge, which studies within the functionalist discourse have made to our understanding of change through transformational leadership, the educational leadership literature is particularly germane to this study due to its focus upon followers and distributed leadership such as Spillane (2006) and Thody (2003).

The review of the literature therefore stimulated a re-evaluation of the epistemology (Cassell and Symon, 2004; Johnson and Duberley, 2003). This concurs with the process articulated by Krauss (2005) which succinctly described epistemology as being to do with questions of how we know what we know and what the researcher counts as knowledge. This led to a reappraisal of the epistemological stance of the research and to a consideration of the questions: What is to be counted as leadership? How is that knowledge of leadership acquired? How do we know what we know about leadership in an academic context? By considering these epistemological questions in relation to the leadership literature and in the

formation of the research approach, it became evident that a multiplicity of postures coexists as to what counts as being knowledge with respect to leadership. Furthermore, it was as necessary to be cognisant of what was not going to be included as what would, for the purposes of this research.

In evaluating the literature in the previous chapters it also became evident that there was a divergence as to whether social context should be included in what counts as knowledge in the study of leadership and followership. For example, Peck and Dickinson (2009) argued that leadership should be viewed through the lens of its social context, and furthermore, that behavioural norms and organisational culture have significant bearing upon how people lead or follow. In support of the significance of contextual knowledge, Peck and Dickinson (2009) observed that leadership can be expressed simultaneously as formal and informal and that persons can serve as both leaders and followers, depending on the situational context. Hence, for Peck and Dickinson (2009), their epistemology included the knowledge of organizational contexts. Conversely Bass (1999) has argued that, from the evidence of over twenty years' research into leadership, the pre-eminent focus of our knowledge of leadership should be upon the influence of the leader's personality and their transformational leadership qualities. Accordingly, in Bass's epistemology the knowledge of what leadership is resides in studies of the leader's personality and his or her ability to bring about transformation in an organisation (Bass, 1999). Consequently the focus of knowledge is upon the leader and their personal characteristics as measured by the positivistic Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2001). The inherent epistemological

assumption in the research by Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2001) and Bass (1999) is that leadership can be measured by predetermined criteria, as set out by the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire.

The discussion of differing objects and methods of study above illustrates that the focus of what constitutes knowledge of leadership is determined by the researcher's epistemology. Furthermore, writers within the field of leadership research have selected differing epistemological approaches. For example, the approach of Bass (1999) focuses primarily on the personal characteristics of the leader. Each researcher inevitably has to make choices about what knowledge they elect to include and report upon and conversely what they exclude from their research. The process of reviewing the epistemology thereby surfaces this issue of knowledge and what is to be included or excluded by the researcher's choices (Krauss, 2005; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

In discussing differing perceptions of reality it is relevant to observe that researchers do not commence their study as value-free entities. Instead each person has his or her personal iconography as to what leadership might be. These perceptions are of significance to research because they influence the lens through which the researcher views leadership and how they construct a reality to interpret those personal experiences. This is relevant here because, as argued by Krauss (2005), it is the researcher's theoretical lens which guides the focus of their research and the underlying belief system of the researcher and their ontological assumptions which largely define the choice of methodology. Consequently, the researcher's perception of

leadership as perceived through their personal iconography of leadership will thereby both form and inform their research. It is in recognizing these choices as to how research is constituted that Hertz (1997, p. viii) urged reflexivity in recognizing those influences on the: *'choices of the questions, who they study and who they ignore.'* This is also where this section began, in recognition that this study continues to evolve through re-examination and reiteration.

Consequently, this research follows the proposition that both the researcher and respondents have values *'even if they have not been made explicit,'* (Collis and Hussey, 2003 p.48). This approach to the research includes the awareness that each respondent will have differing perceptions of reality in his or her business school. These perceptions might be shared amongst colleagues, or reflect the personal experiences of the individual respondent. Each story or observation can therefore contribute to the emerging picture of what the respondents believe leadership or followership to be within their business school context.

For example, some of the respondents may offer a peer group view of their leadership experiences. Hence the respondent may prefer to express a view, which they believe expresses the peer group's consensus of leadership. Alternatively, other respondents may proffer their personal and genuinely held beliefs about what they believe a leader or follower is within their organisation. Additionally, some respondents might offer perspectives which, when viewed through the prism of different sources (Janesick, cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000a) might be considered as *'false' consciousness'* (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008, p. 128).

It is relevant to acknowledge here that, although the word '*false*' may be construed to be a value judgement on the part of the researcher, this is not the case. As noted in the previous paragraph, it is acknowledged that both the researcher and the respondents will enter into their meetings with values (Collis and Hussey, 2003). Furthermore, each respondent's contribution is viewed through the prism of perspectives as expressed by other respondents. It is thereby possible that what a person genuinely regards to be efficacious to leadership might not be so regarded by others. For example, the reported rising levels of bureaucracy and the centralisation of leadership in some universities might be regarded by proponents as helpful to efficiency and accountability (Khurana, 2007). Conversely, academics might consider such interventions to be counterproductive to the distribution of leadership responsibility and accountability of scholars and administrators (Bolden *et al*, 2009).

Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) observed that there are some inherent difficulties in leading knowledge workers through the application of a top-down centralised bureaucracy. Hence, the intention to improve leadership performance may be a genuine and sincerely held viewpoint. However, the perceptions of reality, as reported by those respondents who are experiencing the transformation as either an academic leader or follower, might differ from the aspirations of those who designed the policies. Such issues are germane to this study of leadership and followership in business schools, because what people believe to be their reality is also likely to inform their decisions about what leadership and followership might be in a time of transformational changes (Mabey, Kulich, and Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2012; Keleman and Bansal, 2002).

Accordingly, the position of this research is constructivist (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

4.5. Discussion of Discourses

The previous literature review chapters considered work with differing epistemology and ontological perspectives. It was evident that the writers had focused their research lens upon particular areas of knowledge, and conversely there were other areas of knowledge which they had decided not to report on (Krauss 2005; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). It is therefore constructive to be explicit here that the literature reviewed for this study includes the work on the leadership within the areas of transformational, distributed, and followership, (either passive or active) drawn from papers such as (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2005; Bass 1999; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Bolden *et al*, 2009; Collinson 2006; Gronn 2009b; Spillane 2006; Peck and Dickinson, 2009). The research consequently builds upon the knowledge of leadership within the context of complex knowledge-based environments. However, the research lens is focused here upon post-1992 university business schools, where individuals might be both leaders and followers in different situations and thereby accepts the proposition that the situational context should be included in the study of leadership (Peck and Dickinson, 2009). It is consequently likely that this research may highlight differing perceptual realities amongst academics pertaining to their contextual experiences of transformational and distributed leadership and followership. As such, the post-1992 university business school environment provides cases which offer useful possibilities for furthering research into complex knowledge-based environments and thereby contribute to the knowledge of leadership within an academic context.

It has been helpful for this research to utilise the framework which discusses the differences between the discourses (Mabey, 2013). In common with the researcher's choices of epistemology and ontology, the discourse focus can offer differing perspectives upon leadership. Hence, each researcher necessarily makes choices about what knowledge they are going to study. It is therefore necessary to be cognisant of those choices of discourse because, as stated by Mabey and Morrell (2011, p. 113):

'Different discourses lead to contrasting conceptions of who leaders are and this will have profound implications for the way leadership research questions are framed (bearing in mind that discourses are by definition permeable and fluid, not watertight boxes).'

It is worth observing that many of the papers discussed in the literature tended to draw upon more than one discourse. This supports the observation that a study can draw upon a combination of one or more of the four discourses (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). However, Krauss (2005) has observed that, in general, qualitative research is usually based on constructivist ontology, although it is also possible to draw from the other discourses too. It is also worth noting that *'discourse, and indeed reflexivity, sit least comfortably in the positivist work of functionalism and most comfortably in the epistemologically subjectivist discourses (i.e. dialogic, critical and constructivist.'* (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008, p. 22). This research sits in the constructivist discourse. It is also cognisant that respondents may share perceptions that could sit in the dialogic, critical and functionalist discourses too. The figure 4 provides a new adaptation and contribution and was informed by the descriptions of four discourses: dialogic, critical, constructivist and functionalist (Mabey, 2013; Mabey, and Finch-Lees 2008). The new framework has been adapted for this research. Hence the application of the

framework, together with the process of reviewing the epistemology discussed earlier in this section, enabled an evaluation of what areas of knowledge are to be included, or conversely, excluded (Krauss 2005; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). The decision was thereby taken to focus on perceptions of reality presented by the respondents. The framework has been adapted for this research into university business schools as shown below. It has been informed by the descriptions of four discourses as described in the framework are: dialogic, critical, constructivist and functionalist (Mabey, and Finch-Lees 2008). The figure 4 is a new contribution which was designed for this research. It builds upon the work of Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) by creating a framework which is used to inform this research. Accordingly, each discourse description can be used to focus the research lens onto different aspects of what the respondents' shared in their interviews. This research indicated that in a complex knowledge based environment there was likely to be no single predominant objective reality of leadership or followership. Hence the research focus is from a constructivist perspective.

Figure 5: Frame of Discourses in Business Schools

Dialogic Discourse

Respondents asked to tell their stories of how they interpret their business school context. The stories exposed the respondents' iconography of leadership and followership in their institution.

Stories as respondents' folklore of what leadership and followership look like in their business school context

Critical Discourse

Tensions that may exist between leaders and followers, domination, resistance or compliance, insubordination.

Control, exposed as the exercise of power.

Organisational politics.

Respondents' perspectives of how management control functions.

Respondents' "false" consciousness, regarding leadership or followership within their business school context.

Constructivist Discourse

No single predominant objective reality of leader or follower within a business school.

Elements of collective sense making.

Individuals form interpretations

of leaders or followers in their business school context.

Respondents' interpretations of their leadership context.

Functionalist Discourse

Functionalist influences upon the organisational context.

Positivist epistemological focus as to

what counts as knowledge. Ascendency of numerical data

as the measure of performance. Notions of managerial control.

Functionalism within the leadership lexicon of Business schools.

As discussed earlier in this section, functionalism has influenced the university organisational context as well as the perceptions of reality which respondents to this research may have, whether those perceptions are positive or negative. Accordingly, when qualitative methodology is utilised, the design, conduct and analysis needs to demonstrate that its research lens can add to the body of knowledge, precisely because it can illuminate knowledge which would be less accessible through positivist methodological approaches. However, Cunliffe *et al*, (2009, p. 7) cautions that, whilst qualitative researchers should be cognisant as to the ascendancy of quantitative research methodologies, they also need to be mindful that their research should be able to communicate to the wider community of scholars and not just an esoteric set of qualitative researchers:

‘In a context where quantitative research continues to be regarded as the hallmark of “science” and the randomised controlled trial as the gold standard for incontrovertible “evidence,” and hence funding, qualitative research is at best subaltern, most frequently marginalized, and occasionally dismissed as subjectively compromised or ideologically motivated. The more sophisticated the qualitative methodology gets, the more it courts a double marginalization, by rendering itself less amenable to quasi-quantitative reconstruction and incorporation into multi-method compromises, and risks telling its tales to itself.’

Accordingly, the use tests such as in the work of Bass (1999) continues to have a significant influence on the discussion of leadership. It is also frequently cited in subsequent literature by authors, as discussed in the literature review chapters.. The work of Bass (1999) and Bass and Avolio (1994) generally sits within the functionalist, positivist discourse. Hence, their positivist epistemology has focused on quantifiable data as being what counts as knowledge and therefore they have invested little or no attention to the underlying qualitative individual

perceptions, because they are not included in what their research counts as relevant knowledge. *'A primary measure of transformational leadership has been the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1990).'*' (Grint 2003, p.203).

Hence, within the context of this research (post-1992 university business schools), it is possible that some of the respondents may have both a theoretical and practical knowledge of leadership models. Consequently, the respondents' perceptions of leadership might have been influenced, either positively or negatively, by the positivistic transformational leadership literature and the functionalist discourse (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). Indeed, a senior manager might have been appointed to their university to act as transformational leader for change (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2005; Bass 1999; Bass and Avolio, 1994). This is probably because the notion, as promulgated by functionalist authors such as Bass (1999) that, when faced with major changes, organisations require a particular kind of leader has held popular currency for some decades. Consequently, functionalism has permeated into the leadership lexicon of both the private and public sectors, which includes the universities. This could have interesting possibilities in studying how followers might interpret a transformative process in their business school, whether that might be positively or negatively. Either way, the functionalist discourse is likely to have influenced perceptions of reality within business school contexts. Alternatively, it is possible to approach a respondent's story with a different discourse and thereby focus the research lens elsewhere. For example, according to the work of Gabriel (2000, p.5), *'Positivist research privileged facts over narratives, steering stories in the direction of facts. Stories in organisations are*

relatively special narrative phenomena competing with other types of discourse including theories, statistics and reports.' The approach described in the work of Gabriel (2000) draws upon the dialogic discourse, which places the focus of the research upon the stories of leadership told by respondents. Whilst a functionalist researcher would study a story with regard to how it could be used to support quantifiable data, or as part of the data itself, this is not so in the dialogic discourse. Hence research conducted through the dialogic discourse would not be seeking to extract a problem or a solution. Accordingly, Russell and Kelly (2002) observed that dialogic research does not seek to find pre-existing truths. Instead, it considers meanings, which may be produced or surfaced through an interactive dialogue between the researcher and the respondent.

In a framework of discourses, the critical discourse focuses on issues of '*political struggle*' (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008, p22). Accordingly, a paper by Grey (2004) viewed business schools from the perspective of the critical discourse and argued that being informed by critical management education should reinvent the business schools in the United Kingdom. Hence, if a business school were viewed from the critical discourse perspective, the research focus would be upon the tensions that may exist between leaders and followers. The research may also study the managerial systems of control and the implications those systems might have for academic freedoms in research and teaching. Consequently, according to Ferlie *et al*, (2008, p. 7) who viewed university business schools from the perspective of the critical discourse, '*Management is explained by the exercise of power and politics*'. This perspective could also encompass issues of management control, where it might be argued that academic

criticality could be subsumed beneath financial imperatives. Accordingly, for Ferlie *et al*, (2008) the business schools may have already gravitated too far towards a ‘for-profit’ model. Thereby financial imperatives have gained the ascendancy over critical independence as argued by Starkey and Tiratsoo (2007).

In applying the discourses to this research, the initial premise, prior to conducting the case-studies, is that there is likely to be no single predominant objective reality within a complex knowledge based organisation such as a university. Consequently constructivist ontology (Denzin and Lincoln 2000a; Denzin and Lincoln 2000b; Thorpe 2008) seems appropriate, accepting the possibility that there might be multiple realities, as constructed by academics experiencing the phenomenon of interest, which in the case of this research, is leadership in a post-1992 university business school context. The constructivist discourse accepts the proposition that our ‘*consciousness is constructed*’ (Macdonell, 1987, p. 39). Indeed, in preparing this part of the dissertation and reflecting upon the discourses it became apparent that this research could be developed further through constructivist discourse. According to Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008, p.79) ‘*The [constructivist] discourse can be considered as emphasising duality in the sense that organisations are regarded as systems of distributed cognition...in which the challenge is to coordinate actions among multiple and potentially conflicting views expressed by individuals who are interested in developing and maintaining autonomy as well as their unique, personal identities.*’

The constructivist ontology is appropriate in this study of the university business school environment where members are likely to be, through their chosen career and interests, more

predisposed to be vocal about how their interactions with colleagues are organised. Such workers are, at least ostensibly, valued for their knowledge by those who are given the responsibility of leadership. Indeed, Paauwe and Williams (2001 p. 94) go further by observing that: ‘... *controlling what people do is hardly useful when dealing with knowledge workers. They cannot really be managed. They can only be led.*’ It would therefore also be useful to include the stories which might emerge through what lecturers say about leadership within their working context (Mabey *et al*, 2012; Peck and Dickinson, 2009). This would thereby include some dialogic influences into the research by studying the stories of leadership which respondents indicated as examples of leadership within their business school context (Gabriel, 2000).

It is also possible that the research might find that some academic leaders function within a world of “*false*” *consciousness*,’ whereby what they believe to be true may not necessarily be so (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008, p128). This draws upon the critical discourse, which endeavours to expose behaviours that uncritically accept peer group thinking and leader led directives (Mabey and Morrell, 2011). This is not a value judgement of individual respondents, but rather an observation drawn from the literature that the proliferation of quantitative data and the default status of the functionalist discourse in management research (Cunliffe *et al*, 2009; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008) could impose an imperative upon academic leaders towards a disproportionately biased focus upon positivist interpretations of reality. In support of this observation Schwartz (1990, p. 68) offered the critical analysis that by concentrating on discussions amongst their senior management peers, those at the top of

organisations may develop a false consciousness of reality, which may precipitate '*over centralisation of operational decision making.*'

In exploring the framework of discourses in relation to their application to the research, it became apparent, as observed by Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) that the discourses do not sit within watertight compartments. However, the research is interested in the perceptions of reality, as reported by those respondents, accordingly the position of this research is constructivist. Although other discourses are also interested in perceptions of reality, the constructivist discourse is where reality is emergent, co-created and interpreted on many levels by different stakeholders (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). As such the research studies the differing perceptions of leadership and followership expressed by the respondents.

4.6. Chapter Summary

In reviewing the discourses by reflecting upon the epistemological and ontological choices, the research sits broadly within the constructivist discourse (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). Additionally, the dialogic discourse offers the possibility for further insights by focusing the research lens upon the stories told by respondents of leadership within their organisational context (Gabriel 2000; Peck and Dickinson, 2009).

A framework has been adapted for this research into university business schools, which is informed by the descriptions of four discourses as described in the framework by Mabey, and Finch-Lees (2008). Accordingly, each discourse description can be used to focus the research

lens onto different aspects of what the respondents' shared in their interviews. This research indicated that in a complex knowledge based environment there was likely to be no single predominant objective reality of leadership or followership. Hence the research focus is from a constructivist perspective. The research approach thereby enables the study of the potential for divergence in leader and follower perceptions as to what it might mean to be an academic leader or follower where even the terms '*leader and follower*' may not be part of the social perception in a post-1992 university business school (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

The process of reflexivity has contributed to the evolution of the epistemology and ontology of the research (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; Johnson and Duberley, 2003; Johnson and Cassell, 2001). The literature studied in the preceding chapters included contributions from the predominantly functionalist, constructivist and dialogic discourses (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). Those readings indicated that the university environment contains situations where academics may regard managerial control antipathetically (Paauwe and Williams, 2001). Hence, there is a possibility that there might be contradictions in espoused aspirations for both autonomy and distributed, consultative leadership in both the rhetoric and the perceived reality of leadership in the post-1992 university business school (Bolden *et al*, 2009; Bolden *et al*, 2008b; Spillane, 2006). Thereby, divergences might emerge from differing perceptions of reality or in the stories respondents provide regarding their experiences of leadership (Gabriel 2000; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008; Peck and Dickinson, 2009).

5. Methodology

5.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the methodological choices underpinning the primary research. The preceding philosophy chapter has discussed the reflexivity through which the methodology emerged, together with the epistemological and ontological perspectives underpinning the research (Johnson and Cassell, 2001). As discussed in that chapter, reflexivity surfaced awareness to the choices of discourses that could be applied to researching a university environment (Finlay 2002; Orr and Bennett, 2009; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

The rationale for focusing upon one segment of higher education, rather than the whole sector, was discussed in the introductory chapter. The literature review also surfaced the potential for new research, which focuses on a set of case-studies within one subset of universities instead of the whole sector. Hence the context for this research is leadership in post-1992 university business schools, the former polytechnics, which were awarded university status in 1992 (Pratt, 1997; Nair *et al*, 2010).

Some of the post 1992s which draw from students with middle to lower entry grades have group of universities has experienced a transforming expansion of student numbers, which was initiated by the Labour government's policy to expand higher education in the 1990s. More recently, the higher education sector is experiencing uncertainties following the

economic consequences of the national financial crisis, 2008 -2011(Arthur and Piatt, 2010; Morgan and Newman, 2010). These major changes and reorganisations are likely to have a significant impact on leader-follower relationships as they endeavour to adapt to transforming organisational contexts. The case-studies have been selected because two of them provide a context of transforming organisational restructuring and redundancies whilst the third has retained some stability and continuity. Accordingly, the cases offer a rich study of what it means to be a leader or follower – and sometimes both – in a post-1992 university business school.

5.1.1 The Research Title

To address the aforementioned research, the thesis question has been constructed as follows:

What does Leadership and Followership mean in a Post-1992 University Business School?

5.1.2 Research Questions

- *Within a transforming environment for post-1992 business schools what part, if any, does transformational leadership contribute?*
- *What is the role of followers in a post-1992 business school context*
- *‘To explore perceptions of reality or rhetoric of distributed leadership.’*

5.1.3 Constructivist Discourse

The philosophy chapter identified that constructivist ontology would be appropriate to this research context, wherein there might be multiple realities, as constructed by academics experiencing leadership within a working environment which is undergoing transforming changes (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000a; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000b; Thorpe, 2008). Hence, some members of the case studied business schools may live in: '*constructions of reality that at best give an imperfect grasp*' of their environment, informed by an internally constructed and accepted reality (Morgan, 1997, pp. 215-216). In evaluating the methodological choices this researcher was thereby cognisant that the research design can influence the eventual outcomes (Hardy *et al*, 2001; Keleman and Bansal, 2002). Hence, the choice of discourse influences the direction of the research focus (Mabey and Morrell, 2011). The discussion in earlier chapters also recognised that the discourses do not sit in discrete compartments. In recognition of the fluidity between discourses, the research was cognisant of the possibility that constructivist, dialogic, critical and functionalist discourse might surface in the respondents' testimonies (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

As discussed in the previous chapter constructivist ontology is appropriate to an environment where there might be multiple realities, as constructed by academics experiencing leadership and followership within a context of an environment which is experiencing transforming changes (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000a; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000b; Thorpe, 2008). This research thereby proceeds from the perspective that it will be exploring leadership possibilities, primarily through the constructive discourse. In recognition of this fluidity

within discourses, this researcher is cognisant of the possibility that elements of the dialogic and critical and functionalist discourses may emerge through the meetings with respondents (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2002; Thorpe, 2008).

In the context of this research (post-1992 university business schools) many of the respondents are likely to have both a theoretical and practical knowledge of leadership theories and thereby to have formed some views on how those theories might apply to leadership in their business school. There is an extensive body of quantitative, positivist research, which has emerged in recent decades and is likely to have informed or influenced the respondents' perceptions of what leadership or followership might be (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). In consequence, the leadership iconographies of the sample groups of academics are likely to include perceptions of leadership which have been influenced in some part by the functionalist discourse. Accordingly, the respondents' perceptions of leadership may have been influenced, either positively or negatively, by the positivistic transformational leadership literature (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

5.2 . The Sample Set: Selection Criteria and Sampling Rationale

The research focuses on three post-1992 university business schools as a basis for gathering the respondent interviews. The sample was constructed to include respondents from different leadership and followership positions to include Deans, Professors, Programme Directors and Lecturers within the three cases studied (Cassell and Symon, 2004, p.207). The research is interested in studying the similarities of perceptions within groups of academics across the

different business schools, so the research approaches the study from a subjectivist perspective. Accordingly, the twenty respondents were not selected as a definitive of the business schools they work in. Nor is the research intended to extrapolate generalisable data across the sector, or for the post 1992 universities. It is however interested in the perceptions of reality which respondents shared and the similarities in testimonies by respondents in similar role positions, but working in three business schools (Mabey, 2013; Macdonell 1987).

The university business schools were selected from the list of post 1992 universities which was discussed in the introductory chapter and represented in figure 1. The selection process for the cases avoided universities which were at the bottom of the league tables, where major contextual issues such as finance or quality standards could be precipitating major changes or emergency interventions to address issues such as financial crisis or a failing quality standards problem. This would place such universities in situations wherein actions could be required to address critical situations (see Figure 3, Grint 2008a). However, the three selected business schools were experiencing some reduction in student numbers and consequently funding, as indicated in the report the Hefce Report (2014). This could thereby create some interesting situations for leadership and followership to address.

Two of the cases were selected because they had experienced multiple reorganisations and changes of Deans. These two universities thereby offered the possibility of interviewing respondents who are experiencing leadership and followership in a rapidly transforming change environment. Thereby with a potential to present complex leadership and

followership situations as defined by Grint's (2008a) model in figure 3 as a '*wicked situation*'. If the respondents were to indicate such a situation, Grint's (2008a) model recommends a consultative approach to leadership in unknown situations. In such circumstances a consultative approach was also supported in the research by Bolden *et al*, (2008b). The rationale for selecting the third case was that the Dean had been in post for a longer period and there had been fewer transforming changes to the business school. This set of respondents might thereby offer perceptions from a more stable institutional context.

The process of selecting and then approaching universities to participate with the research was an interesting learning journey in itself and took several months (Orr and Bennett, 2009).

For example, two universities which I initially contacted, agreed to receive the research introductory plan as recommended in the work of Burgoyne, James and Turnbull (2006). The information on the research and interview questions provided potential participants with an overview of what to expect if they agreed to participate with the research. This document is contained in Appendix 4. In two cases I waited for a response and after some weeks had passed I followed up with the Deans, who subsequently declined to take part in the research. However, one of the Dean's, who did agree to allow his /her faculty to take part in the research, cited the quality the research plan as the reason for agreeing to the participation (Dean B). So on balance the preparations were useful and helped people to decided whether they would like to engage with the research. This was also helpful in enabling individual respondents decide whether or not to participate with the research (Burgoyne *et al*, 2006).

Upon further reflection, perhaps the focus of this research, in studying perceptions of leadership and followership, may have been perceived by some universities, as controversial and challenging to their status quo? If so, it was not my intention to be controversial and indeed by turning the research lens onto academia, this thesis follows and adds to the work of others such as (Bolden *et al* 2012; Chreim, 2014; Collinson and Collinson, 2009; Gronn 2009a; Lumby, 2013; Macfarlane, 2014; Rayner *et al*; 2010; Spillane 2006).

Once I had attained agreement by the Deans to conduct the research with their academic colleagues in the business schools the selection of respondents could proceed. For the purposes of confidentiality the Deans were asked to allow access via email to members of their faculty, though they had no knowledge of who would be contacted. It was also important to the research that those respondents, who agreed to take part, retained their anonymity and could thereby be more confident to share their perceptions of leadership and followership.

There was a fortunate outcome with the C business school. I was able to gain the agreement of three Deans, who had been in post in quick succession. The three people did not know each other, beyond their relatively brief intersections as Dean with the C business school. The first had been in post for some years, the second had a short term as acting Dean and then a third new permanent incumbent joined at about the time I was gathering research interviews. Hence, the research was able to hear from three people who had led the C business school and who reported very different perceptions of reality of how they saw leadership and

followership in that particular context. Hence, the three C case Deans shared widely differing views of the C case context and of what each perceived the role of Dean to be in leadership (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003).

Interestingly, other academics in the C case were not as forthcoming in accepting invitations to participate with the research. For example, one of the senior lecturers approached agreed to participate initially and then missed three appointments to meet for the interview. Several other academics that I approached in the C case did not reply to the requests. Accordingly, the research from the C case did not hear from as many people across the business school as I originally would have liked. However, the overall respondent set from the three cases did gather representatives from academics in different posts and the C case made a valuable contribution in the comparative perceptions shared by the other Deans in the B and A studies

The A case had experienced more leadership stability than either of the other two business schools. For example, the A business school Dean had been in post for several years, although it transpired that in 2014 s/he moved to a different university. It is thereby possible that s/he was content to comment more openly about the A business school because s/he would not be planning to stay? That being said, the long service of this Dean may have thereby produced stability the business school for several years which may be reflected in what respondents' shared about their perceptions of leadership and followership. In the A business school there were again, academics that were invited, but opted not to take part in the research. However, the A case did contribute respondents who were heads of department

from different cognate areas within a business school. Also a professor, programme directors and lecturers agreed to participate with the research.

The B case was selected because it had experienced more staff changes and Deans than the A and C cases. Accordingly, the B case might surface some interesting leadership and followership perceptions in a rapidly transforming context. In common with the C case, the B case had a relatively new in post, though managerially experienced Dean. It was also contextually different from the C and A Cases in that there had been a succession of Deans who had remained in post for just short periods. Whilst there was some similarity with the C case which had three Deans in a short time frame, the B case had also experienced a number of structural reorganisations, and many more changes of Dean and academics in management posts across that business school. This then provided a context where there was more turbulence and transformation than might be anticipated in the cases A and C.

In the B business school it was the executive level academics that were less willing to participate, although a professor and the head of executive education agreed to be interviewed and provided an interesting contributions to the research. Hence, several of the Heads of Department declined to take part in the research. I was however able to access two senior academics that had recently left the B case who agreed to be interviewed, on the basis that the research was confidential. The research protocol is to retain the confidentiality of all the respondents. After they had received the research introductory information I was pleased that both respondents felt sufficiently confident to agree to contribute their interviews.

The two respondents shared both their perceptions and subsequent reflection on leadership and followership in the B case. For background context, they had moved onto new roles in other universities. In some respects, what they shared concurred with academics across all three cases. However, they provided an additional reflective contribution about their experiences and expressed their feelings with some uninhibited metaphors and observations on leadership and followership (Etherington, 2004; Johnson and Duberley, 2003).

A case-study strategy (Denzin and Lincoln 2000a; Denzin and Lincoln 2000b; Yin 1994a; 1994b) has been utilised: '*A case-study is not a method but a research strategy*' (Hartley in Cassell and Symon, 2004, p.322). The case-study approach facilitated the collection of rich data and thereby draws upon the '*context from which the interviewee is perceiving the world*' (Yin 1994a, p. 57). This approach is also supported by Hartley (cited in Cassell and Symon, 2006 p. 323) in recognising that: '*The case-study is particularly suited to research questions which require detailed understanding of social or organizational processes because of the rich data collected in context.*' Accordingly, the respondents' transcripts can be studied as a '*thick description*' (Geertz 1973), which is discussed later in this chapter.

The respondents' transcripts are studied to build an understanding of the respondents' perceptions of reality (constructivism) regarding what leadership and followership might mean within their business school context (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008 p. 22). Krauss

(2005) however observed that, in general, qualitative research is usually based on constructivist ontology, although it is also possible to draw from the other discourses too. It is also worth noting that: *'discourse and indeed reflexivity, sit least comfortably in the positivist work'*. According to King (Cassell and Symon, 2004, p.256) researchers who are observing multiple interpretations of a phenomenon may use template analysis of the respondents' transcripts for their study. This follows the multifaceted crystallisation whereby according to Janesick (cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2003 p. 67): *'Crystallization recognises the many facets of any given approach to the social world.'*

The initial selection criteria for the case-studies were based upon the requirements discussed in the preceding paragraphs. However, those criteria could apply to many post-1992 business schools. Hence, to further refine the selection, an additional leader criterion was included; namely the time in which the Dean of a Business School had been in post was taken into consideration. This was considered to be of potential significance to the research because the leadership / followership relationships are likely to have evolved over time. Furthermore, during the course of a number of years, a Dean will have had more time to reflect upon their role as a leader. Conversely, a newly appointed Dean will be in the process of forming his or her own role identity and the relationships with their colleagues.

Hence, the refined selection of case-studies includes Deans who have served in two business schools, which have experienced a succession of new Deans and restructuring and a third where the Dean has retained a longer period of tenure in their business school. The final case-

study selections therefore included one business school where the Dean had been established in post for a number of years. By contrast, in another selected case-study, the Dean was newly appointed. Indeed, the particular business school was selected because there had recently been frequent changes of the Dean. For example, in that particular case-study, the sample includes interviews with three Deans, one who had recently departed, another who had served as an interim Dean who applied but was not subsequently appointed to the permanent post, and a third person, who was successfully appointed.

The application of the criteria for sampling guided the case-study selection as well as the choices of which respondents to include in the study. Notwithstanding the sampling and respondent selection criteria, the research also recognised that these choices would be predicated upon whether respondents would agree to interviews as well as upon the access granted to the selected business schools.

For the purposes of anonymity and in compliance with the university ethics code of practice, names and places and details pertaining to the post holders are removed in this chapter and the discussions in subsequent chapters.

Each case study was labelled anonymously, respectively, Case A, Case B and Case C.

Each of the respondents has been ascribed a code, as set out below:

Deans

Dean C1 Current

Dean C2 Acting

Dean C3 Previous

Dean B1 Current

Dean A1 Current

Heads of Department

H of D C1

H of D A1

H of D A2

Professors (non-Dean posts)

Professor B1

Professor A1

Programme Directors and Principal Lecturers

Principal Lecturer A1

Programme Director A1

Programme Director A2

H of Exec Education B1

Senior Lecturers and Lecturers

Lecturer A1

Senior Lecturer B1

Senior Lecturer B2

Senior Lecturer A1

Focus Group (former Programme Leaders)

B1

B2

Total: 20 respondent

5.3 . *'Thick Description'*

The term '*thick description*' has been promulgated in contemporary qualitative research by the work of Geertz (1973), though he acknowledged the origins of the concept to Ryle (1949). According to Geertz (1973, p. 9), when a researcher presents his or her findings they may transfer their own interpretations onto the words of the respondents. To counterbalance this, Geertz (1973) has argued that it would be beneficial to provide the readers with a '*thick description*' of the organizational context/s within which the research has been conducted, hence, providing the reader with the context in which the respondents are expressing their thoughts. Ponterotto (2006) also commented that the term *context* refers to the working environment in which the respondents have been interviewed.

In the literature study for this research, context has been identified as significant, so accordingly the research has focused on one part of the university sector and one faculty within the post-1992 universities (Peck and Dickinson, 2009; Porter and McLaughlin, 2006).

This decision was supported by the literature review, which noted that the research by Bolden *et al*, (2008a) into both pre-1992 and three post-1992 universities had observed some contextual differences between the research led, traditional universities and the post-1992s. By focusing on one context the findings reported here have surfaced some interesting new research within that particular sectorial context.

The findings in the next chapter should therefore be considered within the context of the post-1992 university business school context, which has been discussed and critically evaluated within the preceding chapters: specifically, the introductory chapter and the literature chapter, which focused on leadership in higher education. The aforementioned chapters provided the thesis with a discussion of the context in which the respondents in this chapter are commenting and sharing their stories of leadership (Peck and Dickinson, 2009; Ponterotto, 2006).

The findings presented in the next chapter have surfaced many evocative images and emotional testimonies by academics in the case studied business schools, and are presented here in a thick description. *'Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard'* (Denzin 1989, p. 83). This concurs with the approach articulated by Holloway (1997, p.154) whereby: *'This type of [thick] description aims to give readers a sense of the emotions, thoughts and perceptions that research participant's experience.'*

5.4 Research Design and Analysis

The research design plans to utilise case-study strategy (Denzin and Lincoln 2000a; Denzin and Lincoln 2000b; Yin 1994a; 1994b). The research will thereby evaluate leadership and followership inside the three selected business schools by interviewing academics, whilst being cognisant of the possibility that academics can be both leaders and followers, as discussed in the literature review. The research design has thereby been informed by and builds upon the work of other studies in this field and plans to conduct interviews with both academics with management responsibilities as well as those who do not have a formal leader role (Anderson *et al*, 2005; Boerner *et al*, 2007; Burgoyne and James 2006; Bush 2010; Gronn 2000; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008; Peck and Dickinson 2009). Accordingly, in their discussion of research methodology and design, Saunders *et al*, (2003) noted that, for the most part, research designs, which follow an inductive approach, use open-ended interview questions. This approach is consistent with the use of the constructivist discourse, which is generally regarded as being more compatible with qualitative research methodology than with quantitative designs.

The metaphor of methodological triangulation is routinely employed to provide the researcher with the opportunity to view a case-study from the perspective of three or more research perspectives. However, there is another metaphor that may be more usefully applied to this qualitative research, which is studying respondents in complex leadership situations,

where a person may be a leader and a follower according to the activity. According to Janesick (cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2003 p. 67): *'Crystallization recognises the many facets of any given approach to the social world. The image of the crystal replaces that of the land surveyor and the triangle'*. The crystal metaphor was also used in the work of Richardson in Denzin and Lincoln (2000) who argued for the deployment of a more multifaceted approach to researching complex environments where both external and internal influences may be at work. Richardson in Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 934) observed that: *'In triangulation, a researcher deploys different methods – such as interviews, census data, and documents – to 'validate' findings... there are far more than 'three sides' from which to approach the world. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves.'* Accordingly, this research plans to approach the study primarily from a constructivist perspective, whilst recognising that a prism of other reflections is also likely to include elements of the dialogic and critical discourses. Furthermore, as discussed earlier in this section, there is fluidity within discourses. Additionally, this researcher is cognisant to the background influence of functionalism within the academic business school community (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). For the purposes of this research, an inductive approach is more appropriate for this study than a deductive methodological approach because this research plans to encourage respondents to explore their perceptions as to what it might mean to be a leader, follower or both within a university business school context.

5.4.1 Constant Comparison

The purpose of organising the transcripts is to prepare the materials so that they can be presented in the findings and then reviewed in the subsequent analysis and discussion chapter. The process of reviewing the interviews began by listening to the transcripts for over a year and constantly comparing each respondent's comments, observations and stories with the others. By listening to the recordings and reading and re-reading the transcripts the respondents' voices began to surface patterns of similar behaviours, contextual observations, stories and critical evaluations. For example, people in similar roles who did not know each other and were unaware of where the other cases studies were cited were sharing very similar experiences (Boeije 2002; Tesch 1990). Even in the early stages of reviewing the transcripts a sense of saturation was emerging. The tone of expressions, which surfaced the anxiety caused by job insecurity and the frustration of not being heard or valued was palpable in the recordings. The respondents' voices therefore provided a rich narration of their contextual experiences and observations on transformational leadership, followership and the distribution of leadership.

In Tesch (1990) the author sets out a number of approaches for organising qualitative data ranging from what she describes as positivistic structures at one polarity to an unstructured reflection at the other where the researcher reflects upon what s/he has gathered from the research. The approach in this thesis broadly sits within what Tesch described as:

'The comprehension of the meaning of text or action:

a. through the discovery of themes

b. through interpretation'

Accordingly, Tesch (1990) advises researchers to: *'Divide the text into segments, and then sort these segments into groups.'* (Tesch (1990 p114). In this research the respondents' transcripts were initially organised into similar leadership / followership sets in each business school. The sets were then sub-divided across the three cases so that people in similar roles could be compared. Thereby the research was able to compare testimony from sets of people who were viewing their particular business school from the perspective of a broadly similar leadership / followership perspective. The word *broadly* is inserted in the sentence above because academia tends to be an environment where people may lead in one situation and follow in another, as was discussed in the preceding literature review chapters (Peck and Dickinson 2009).

The sets of transcripts were then compared both from within each case-study and contrasted across the three cases to surface any commonalities of perspectives on transformational leadership, followership and distributed leadership. The process of continuous comparative reviews led to the *'discovery of themes'* which are set out in the findings chapter (Tesch (1990 p114). Accordingly, the emergent themes were surfaced from the voices of what respondents reported as their experiences of leadership and followership and distributed leadership.

The paper by Boeije (2002, p 408) on constant comparative method advises researchers that there is *'no prescription or procedure for identifying exactly which comparisons'* to select.

Indeed, Boeije (2002) encourages researchers to put their experience, knowledge and talents to reflective purpose in their deliberations and consideration of how to approach their choices. In so doing, it is also helpful to hold in consciousness the chosen research epistemology and ontology, which defines what is to be studied and thereby conversely what is not an area for the research study (Johnson *et al*, 2006; Johnson and Cassell 2000; Mingers 2003). What emerged were patterns of consensus or dissensions about life in a post 1992 university business school reflected in the respondents' felt experiences of leadership in their organisational contexts (Boeije 2002; Tesch 1990).

5.4.2 The Template Codes

The design of the codes template was informed by the work of King in Cassell and Symon (2004, pp. 257-270). The template provides a list of codes, which were constructed in order to thematically organise and thereby subsequently analyse the textual data which has been collected for the primary research. The template codes list was originally longer and a code was connected to each interview question and for each literature review subheading. An iterative approach was adopted in reviewing the transcripts and reevaluating the codes (Silverman, 2005). In the initial reviews of the data it was found that the respondents' testimonies were being dissipated throughout several overlapping codes. Hence, a more concise list of codes would enable the voices of the respondents to be heard more clearly with fewer coded sub-divisions. Therefore, some of the original codes become redundant and a more focused coding list emerged to allow the voices of respondents to be heard in a more

concise and coherent narrative.

The preparation of the codes was designed so that the respondents' testimonies could be reviewed and compared in the findings chapter. The code reviewing process took several months. Even now it is possible to argue that perhaps one of the sub codes might be left out;

2 b) *Awareness of social groups*. This code was derived from the work of Erickson (2010), which was discussed in the literature review. It seeks to surface organisational self-awareness. For Erickson (2010), educational leaders ought to be asking questions inside their institutions as noted earlier. Upon reflection, the questions raised by Erickson (2010) regarding how colleagues behave and interact within their university were useful to the analysis of leadership in a business school context. Hence, the collaboration or disunity of colleagues might influence what leaders can achieve and as such it was decided to retain that code. Indeed, with regard to continuing minor modifications to the template codes, Cassell and Symon (2004 p. 263) have reflected that researchers need to accept that: *'It is possible to go on modifying and refining definitions of codes almost ad infinitum, but research projects inevitably face external constraints which mean that you do not have unlimited time.'*

Whilst re-reading and reviewing the findings, the present shortened list of codes appeared to be sufficiently robust to serve in drawing out the relevant material, without dissipating the stories which respondents wanted to tell. The findings drawn from each of the transcripts presented are therefore sequentially organised according to the revised codes listed below. Each of the twenty respondents' transcripts has therefore been reviewed, coded and organised

to be presented in the findings chapter within clusters of academics with comparable posts of leadership or followers from the three case studied business schools.

5.4.3 The Revised Template Codes

1. Business School leadership

- a) Limits of formal authority
- b) Exerting influence as a leader or follower

2. Awareness of the organisational context of leadership

- a) Experiences of leadership in the organisational context
- b) Awareness of social groups

3. Transformational leadership

- a) Perceptions of what leadership is within a transformational context
- b) Perceptions of how to respond (as a leader or follower) to changes in their organisational environment

4. The role of followership

- a) Attitudes to leadership and influence by followers
- b) Limits of informal authority

5. Power and Conflict in business school leadership

- a) Attitudes to power or powerlessness in both formal and informal leadership roles
- b) Access to and control of resources and other sources of power in both formal and informal leadership roles

6. Distributive leadership in the business school

- a) What is their lived experience of leadership?
- b) Perceptions of the distribution of leadership rhetoric or in reality

7. Perceptions of the organisation

- a) Stories about the organisation
- b) Stories of leadership as a leader or follower

The research recognises that the themes are not in watertight compartments but the richness of the respondents' observations in the thematic approach enables the subsequent analysis in relation to the literature review themes (Transformational leadership; Leadership and Followership in a post-1992 university business school context; the role of Followership).

The codes are linked to the themes as noted below:

Code 1 Leader follower

Code 2 Leader follower relationships in context

Code 3. Transformational leadership

Code 4 Followers

Code 5 Impact of change on followership

Codes 6 Distributed leadership

Code 7 Leader and follower relationships

5.5 Emerging Themes

For the purposes of accessibility and subsequent analysis, the findings in chapter six are organized under themes. One of the outcomes to surface from the research is the comparatively similar perspectives which the respondents expressed when in a similar role, even when working in different universities. Accordingly, in the Findings chapter the post holders across the three university business schools are clustered: hence, sets for Deans; Heads of Department; Professors (who are not Deans); Programme Directors and Principal Lecturers; Senior Lecturers and Lecturers.

The respondents' answers and reflections will subsequently be considered through a thematic comparative analysis with the existing literature on transformational leadership, distributed leadership and followership. The purpose of employing the aforementioned design is to build upon the previous research, to surface possible gaps between the theoretical, espoused and actual practice of leadership and followership in the case studied business schools (Brookes, 2007; English 2002).

The primary data collected will be critically evaluated, compared, and contrasted with the themes which have been discussed in the literature review. In their review of qualitative analysis Saunders *et al*, (2000 p.382) recommend the qualitative researcher to: '*disaggregate the mass of qualitative data that you collect, as you collect, into meaningful and related parts or categories.*' The benefit of the thematic approach is that the research can be categorised so that it is possible to: comprehend and manage the respondents' replies; merge related

materials drawn from different transcripts and notes; identify key themes or patterns for further exploration; form critical evaluations; verify conclusions (Silverman, 2005). The literature review chapters served to identify the discussion arising from transformational, distributed, and followership, drawn from work including, (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe 2005; Bass 1999; Bass and Avolio 1994; Bolden *et al*, 2009; Collinson 2006; Gronn 2009a; Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008; Spillane 2006; Peck and Dickinson 2009).

The research design has been partly informed by the work of Burgoyne and James (2006) who utilised case-study research on leadership. In their methodology Burgoyne and James (2006) observed that by stimulating and encouraging respondents to tell of their experiences of leadership within their organisational context, the research was able to surface the leadership practices as experienced by the participants. Accordingly, Burgoyne and James (2006) sought to find underlying motives through questioning staff about the why, how, what, of leadership in their organisational context. *'The interview protocol had questions framed to explore 'why' and 'how did you decide' as well as 'what', covering the integration of leadership development with business strategy, assumptions of leadership'* (Burgoyne and James, 2006, p. 309). Additionally, Burgoyne and James (2006 p. 309) also found that the reflective experiences of both leaders and followers enriched the depth of respondents' answers so that what emerged from the interviews was *'a theory of leadership in use.'*

Where this research builds on the work of Burgoyne and James (2006) and Bolden *et al*, (2009) is with the inclusion of the possibility that perceived roles of either leaders or

followers are likely to be fluid within the current academic context, where individuals may lead or follow according to the particular tasks being addressed (Peck and Dickinson, 2009).

For example, in reviewing the existing literature and research, it became apparent that there is more depth to be found by addressing the research from the perspective that there could well be '*multiple versions of reality*,' (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008, p. 13). The implications for the research design are therefore to construct in-depth interviews which are able to surface alternative realities, recognising that respondent participants may be either unwilling to disclose, or perhaps unconscious of, any dissonances between espoused values and their personal perspectives. The research therefore aims to listen to respondents' experiences of leadership and their felt realities of leadership in practice (Jung and Avolio, 2000); for example, whether there are counter-organisational attitudes or postures, submerged conflicts and contradictions, which may exist in their business school context. In this respect, cognisance of how the world may be viewed through the different discourses has been helpful to the research design in raising the researcher's awareness that there are many ways of researching a case-study and that each approach places the research lens upon a different area of leadership behaviour. It is useful to reiterate here, as discussed in the previous chapter, that it is the researcher's theoretical lens which guides the focus of his or her research and the underlying belief system of the researcher – his or her ontological assumptions – which largely defines the choice of methodology (Krauss, 2005).

The research plans to employ an inductive questioning methodological approach, building upon previous qualitative research studies into leadership (Zikmund, 1994). This approach thereby benefits from the foundation of earlier work, whilst seeking to gather new research from academics regarding their experiences and perceptions of leadership and their perceived realities of leadership in practice. For example, in the work of Burgoyne and James (2003) and Gabriel and Griffiths in Cassell and Symon (2004) the authors indicated that there is a richness of material to be collected by qualitative studies of respondents' perceptions regarding the realities of leadership in practice. The inclusion of leadership stories, as proposed by Gabriel and Griffiths in Cassell and Symon (2004, p.114), can encourage respondents to tell of how leadership works in their organisation, what kinds of leaders are well regarded or not, and who tends to be asked to serve as a leader. Stories of leadership in practice will offer valuable insights into the respondents' perceived reality of their organisation. *'Searching for the leadership stories enable us to study change in uniquely illuminating ways, revealing how wider issues are viewed...'* (Gabriel and Griffiths in Cassell and Symon 2004, p.114). The research also recognises both the benefits and issues arising from the earlier qualitative studies into leadership. For example, according to Alvesson (2003), the researcher should be aware of the conscious or unconscious obfuscations that respondents may offer in their answers.

'A managerial career calls for being perceived as reliable and rests upon an acquired ability to smoothly navigate in a tactful way, avoiding unnecessary risk taking. A habitual acting so that one cannot be tied to expressing dangerous opinions or indiscretion becomes part of the stuff making up managers.... It seems unlikely that interviewing —whatever the tricks used — manages to fully break this habit.' (p.13-33).

Recognition of this issue has therefore informed the criticality of the method of enquiry discussed here.

The respondents' observations, which may be consciously or unconsciously proffered, are not regarded as a matter to be overcome by the researcher's questioning (Alvesson 2003). Instead, the respondents' perceptions of the leadership reality within their business school are accepted by the research as their testimony within a particular business school context.

It is also possible that respondents may proffer genuinely held beliefs, which, when viewed through a prism of different sources, might be considered to have a preponderance towards “‘*false*’ *consciousness*’ (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008, p. 128). The belief may be honestly proffered and yet untrue. For example Morgan (1997, p. 216) observed that people who share a common environment might misinterpret their situation because they lack external perspectives; hence what he described as a ‘*psychic prison*.’ Accordingly, a respondent's perception of leadership and followership is likely to be influenced by peers and the contextual factors influencing their business school, including interventions such as restructuring and redundancies.

The researcher is conscious that the primary data is derived from the epistemological and ontological choices for the research. Accordingly, instead of a model whereby a positivistic hypothesis has to be proved or disproved, in this research there is no presumption that there is an objective reality, which can be surfaced through a scheme of questions and then subsequently utilised to prove or disprove a hypothesis. For example, Burgoyne and James

(2003) and Remenyi *et al*, (1998) have observed that there are likely to be influences working behind leadership behaviours, so an open questioning approach focusing on the *why? how?* and *what?* can further our research understanding into both leadership and followership. *‘Open questions allowed the story of leadership development to unfold. Informants could prepare by having indicative questions and topic areas in advance. The researchers were interested in uncovering the theory of leadership development in use’* (Burgoyne and James, 2003 p.309). In order to find more in-depth reflective data Burgoyne and James (2003) also recommended that it could be worth considering providing: *‘indicative questions and topic areas in advance’* [to the respondents]. This will be done before each interview.

For example, the research by Bolden *et al*, (2008a, p.362) into leadership in higher education employed the following questions:

- *Why are some people regarded as ‘leaders’ rather than others?*
- *What is it that enables certain people with limited formal authority to exert considerable influence, while others remain relatively powerless despite holding a formal role?*
- *How do those involved experience leadership as it unfolds?*
- *How is personal agency constrained and/or enhanced through access to and control of resources and other sources of power?*

To further underpin the questioning of respondents, the questions will also ask about each respondent's organisational self-awareness. This approach is also informed by the questioning design of Erickson's (2010) research on educational leaders:

- *What is it like to be a [research professor, dean, programme leader]?*
- *Why do groups A and B social groups not socialise with each other?*
- *What does 'name calling' say about what staff believe about their university?*

The questions raised by Erickson (2010) regarding how colleagues behave and interact within their university are helpful to this research, which plans to study leadership in a business school context. Hence, it might be that either collective collaboration or disunities between colleagues may influence what leaders can achieve and to what extent the various constituencies, administration, research, and teaching can, and, in reality, do, coalesce.

5.6 Ethical Considerations for the Research

The subject of ethics in research has traditionally been regarded as dealing with the integrity of the researcher's conduct. For example, the quote below places the emphasis on misconduct in content and reporting: (Federal Register 54:32446-32451, August 8, 1989) cited in Sponholz (2000, 511-514):

'Misconduct in Science' means fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.'

A more contemporary view of ethics in research is more far reaching, as set out by the British Sociological Association which provides guidelines on the conduct of academic research.

The guidelines offered by the BSA include the following:

- *As far as possible research should be based on the freely given informed consent of those studied.*
- *The research participants should be made aware of their right to refuse participation whenever and for whatever reason they wish.*
- *Research participants should understand the extent to which they are afforded anonymity and confidentiality.*
- *Participants should also be able to reject the use of data gathering devices such as tape recorders and video cameras.*

To these ends the BSA recommends the use of a documented consent form, which should inform the respondents of the terms of the research, its purpose and agreement that what they say may not be published without consent. As part of writing a textbook on Human Resource Management, this author produced a consent form based upon the BSA guidelines which has since been adopted by several universities for their students to use in research projects (Nieto, 2006). According to Kervin (1992, pp. 450- 451) there are three particular ethical issues which should be considered: informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, contact effects.

In his words:

- *Informed consent:*
This highlights the need to inform respondents of the purpose of the research and respect their right to refuse to answer questions or have their comments recorded on tape or video. Confidentiality and anonymity ensure that the information collected should not be available to unauthorised persons.
- *Contact effects:*
The researcher should not, unnecessarily invade the respondent's privacy or cause anxiety in probing matters, which may be distressing. We have a responsibility to people before research. If practical it can be useful to produce a consent form to give respondents.'

It is worth noting here that there are close similarities between the guidelines of the British Sociological Society (Kervin, 1992) and the recommendations set out by Remenyi *et al*, (2005, pp. 229-230) affirming the ethical imperatives for, '*openness with the informants*' and '*the integrity of the evidence*'. These ethical considerations are thereby considered as sound for research procedure and particularly apposite to encouraging respondent cooperation and engagement with this research. Given the turbulent and uncertain nature of the transformative changes in higher education, the research is dependent upon the respondents having trust in the integrity of the researcher if they are to offer open and honest observations of leadership and followership in their business schools. The research was submitted to the University of Birmingham's Ethics Committee for approval and the relevant document is included in the appendices. The approval by the ethics committee was based upon the research submission

5.6.1 University of Birmingham Application for Ethical Research

The submission of the ethical review documents was a valuable reflective and formative element of the preparations for conducting the primary research. The document is included in

the appendix 2 and referred to as contributing to the formation of the methodology. The ethical review includes the preparations for research and interview questions. The documents also contain a copy of the consent form, (Appendix 1 research consent form) which was first published by this author in a management book (Nieto, 2006).

5.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter sets out the research plan and the constructivist, qualitative methodology. The sampling strategy is discussed, and the choice of interviews and the coding for study of the data within '*thick description*' of the context. The ethical considerations for the research are also addressed. Indeed, the reflective rigour of preparing the research methodology and the University of Birmingham's application for ethical review focused the research and thereby attained the respect of the academic respondents who agreed to participate in the research. For example, Dean B Current is later reported as commenting that s/he had agreed to take part and allow the business school to be studied because s/he was impressed by the quality of the research proposal.

Respondent: '[In] my previous institution I was responsible for actually formulating and implementing the ethical clearance policy for research students and having received your documentation and had a chance to read it in advance of this interview I was very impressed by the quality of it and it was actually one of the things that encouraged me to agree to participate in this research work.'

This feedback from a senior academic respondent was appreciated and also validated the time invested in preparing the methodological approach to the research. The collective outcome of sending requests to several business schools was that the research focused upon three business schools. Overall a mixture of Deans and other academics including lecturers, Heads of Departments, Directors was gathered within the sample set of twenty respondents.

The primary data will be critically evaluated, compared, and contrasted with the literature review. Accordingly, Tesch (1990) advises researchers to: '*Divide the text into segments, and then sort these segments into groups.*' (Tesch (1990 p114). In this research the respondents' transcripts were initially organised into similar leadership / followership sets in each business school. The sets were then sub-divided across the three cases so that people in similar roles could be compared. Thereby the research was able to compare testimony from sets of people who were viewing their particular business school from the perspective of a broadly similar leadership / followership perspective. The word *broadly* is inserted in the sentence above because academia tends to be an environment where people may lead in one situation and follow in another, as was discussed in the preceding literature review chapters (Peck and Dickinson 2009).

The sets of transcripts gathered will be compared both from within each case-study and contrasted across the three cases to surface any commonalities of perspectives on

transformational leadership, followership and distributed leadership. Indeed, the similarities between respondents in different cases who do not know each other is interesting in surfacing themes of perceptions throughout the full sample set. The process of continuous comparative reviews thereby surfaced '*themes*' which are set out in the next findings chapter (Tesch (1990 p114).

6 Findings

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings of the primary interviews are presented. The respondents' transcripts have been studied through the codes, which are discussed and set out in the methodology chapter (Cassell and Symon, 2004). In preparing the chapter, the aim has been to give the reader access to the voices of the respondents and their experiences of leadership in business schools. As discussed in the methodology, Geertz (1973) observed that it is beneficial to provide the readers with a thick description of the organisational context/s within which the research has been conducted. This chapter presents the respondents' testimonies of leadership within a context of transforming changes in their business schools (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000a; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000b; Thorpe 2008; Winter 2009).

A full transcript of one of the interviews is contained in Appendix 3 together with the interview schedule and participant information sheet which were sent to each participant prior to their interview.

The post 1992 university business schools share many of the challenges of a changing market for student recruitment which are common to the whole of the HE sector. The sample set of respondents were however drawn from three universities wherein their catchment of student recruitment is in the middle to lower grade point achievement, and consequently they have

experienced a fall in student numbers, where other parts of the sector may not or even increased student numbers, according the data collected for The Hefce Report (2014), Two of the sets of respondents are from business schools which have experienced staff restructures and redundancies. Hence, this study provides the leadership research community with a valuable insight of leadership and followership within a rapidly changing institutional environment (Brookes and Grint, 2010; Mabey and Morrell, 2011).

Accordingly the three post-1992 business schools are of research interest because they are being exposed to transforming internal and external forces of change (Bolden *et al* 2014; Bolden *et al* 2008a; HEFCE Report 2010; Keleman and Bansal, 2002; Macfarlane, 2014; Nair *et al*, 2010; O'Reilly *et al*, 2013). Consequently, the three post-1992 university business school case-studies provide the leadership research community with a valuable insight of leadership and followership within a changing institutional environment (Brookes and Grint, 2010; Mabey and Morrell, 2011). For the purposes of accessibility and subsequent analysis, the findings within this chapter are organised under themes. The post holders across the three university business schools are clustered into sets. Hence, sets for Deans; Heads of Department; Professors (who are not Deans); Programme Directors and Principal Lecturers; Senior Lecturers and Lecturers. The research surfaced comparatively similar respondent perspectives when they are in a similar role, across the three universities. Where there is an outlying respondent, the area/s of differentiation are noted for further analysis in the next chapter.

The findings presented in this chapter have surfaced many evocative images and emotional testimonies by academics in the case studied business schools, and are presented here in a thick description: *‘Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard’* (Denzin, 1989, p. 83). This accords with the approach articulated by Holloway (1997, p. 154) whereby *‘This type of [thick] description aims to give readers a sense of the emotions, thoughts and perceptions that research participant’s experience.’*

An example of a full transcript is in Appendix 3.

6.2 The Sample Set of Respondents in the Three Case-studies

For the purposes of anonymity and in compliance with the University Ethics Code of Practice (see Methodology chapter and Appendix 2), names and places are removed throughout the presentation of the findings in this chapter and the discussions in subsequent chapters. Each of the respondents has been ascribed a code, as set out in the methodology, Chapter 5.

The respondents selected for the research represent a sample of academics from three case-studies in business schools within post-1992 universities. In the case of the C set, three Deans have been interviewed, due to the very recent and rapid changes in the post holders of that business school. The implications for leaders and followers of the reported transforming leadership environment are both noted in this chapter and subsequently evaluated in the next chapter in relation to the literature review. The case-study C provided an interesting

contribution because it enabled the research to hear from a Dean (Dean C3 Previous) who had been in post for several years, followed by an Acting Dean (Dean C2 Acting) who was in post for a short period of time and then a newly appointed Dean (Dean C1 Current), who has just arrived in post as an external appointment. This case-study therefore provided an opportunity to view leadership transition and the implications it had for followership.

The findings derived from the C case-study Deans are particularly interesting from a constructivist perspective because each Dean offered considerably different testimony regarding their perceived reality of the same business school. Hence, the three Deans provided testimonies, which offered the research a prism of the differing perceptions of reality. The prism metaphor is discussed in the methodology chapter. According to Richardson in Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 934): *'prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves.'* Consequently, the research findings reporting on the case-study W provide perspectives and reflections of three Deans in succession, one of which has had the opportunity to reflect upon their tenure over a longer period of time, another who had left after serving as an acting Dean and a new post holder. Consequently, in the C case-study there was a period of time whereby each Dean would have been viewing a similar period of contextual circumstances. Hence, Dean C3 was leaving as Dean C2 Acting took over and was subsequently replaced by Dean C1. Each Dean shared different perspectives of leadership, some of which was during a similar time period of the C business school's development.

The B business school was selected because in contrast to the C business school, the Dean B1 Current, post holder has inherited a business school, which has undergone several iterations

of restructuring and redundancies. Accordingly, Dean B1 Current has had time to settle into post and reflect upon the contextual consequences of the restructuring and redundancies of his/her predecessors upon attitudes to leadership and followership in his/her business school (Peck and Dickinson, 2009). In common with the W case-study, in case-study B, there has been a succession of several Deans. Additionally, the findings of Dean B1 Current reports both the post holder's perceptions of the business school, together with Dean B1 Current's summary of staff attitudes, which were gathered from a qualitative study, carried out with the business school academics. The purpose of the Dean's study was to gather the perceptions of what had been happening during several redundancy programmes via numerous Dean changes within the period of a decade. The interview with Dean B1 Current thereby includes the Dean's perceptions of events in context together with his/her reflections upon the testimonies shared by other academics in the case-study B business school.

In the next case-study, A, the situation is different because the current Dean has been in post for several years. The case was therefore selected to serve as a contrast to the two other case-studies C and B as a potential example of a context where there is leadership stability.

The influence of Vice Chancellors is reported in all of the case-studies. There are interesting similarities within the testimonies of all the other Deans, with the exception of the newly appointed Dean C1 Current. In the transcript from Dean A1 Current, the research has gathered some valuable reflections of a Dean's perceptions of the role limitations and the pressures upon Deans' leadership behaviour by Vice Chancellors. The longest serving Dean within the three case-studies, (Dean A1 Current), who was still in post in 2013, provided a

longitudinal sense of what it means to be a leader and follower within a context of constant transformation in higher education. The influences on leadership by the changes in higher education provision and funding are evaluated in the introductory chapter.

The next set of respondents reported here are the Heads of Department (H of D C1; H of D A1; H of D A2). The researcher found that people within the middle management leadership roles across all of the three case-studies were much less willing to accept an invitation to be interviewed for the research. The three academic heads of department who agreed to be interviewed provided a valuable perspective of leadership from a middle manager's academic perspective. The leadership role of a head of department places those respondents in a situation whereby they are closer to the day-to-day working life of a business school and the teaching teams than their immediate managers, the Deans. The Heads of Department also have the responsibility of operationalizing the strategic directions of their university's senior management policy makers. The testimonies of this set of managers surfaced dissonances and tensions between the respondents' personal perspectives of what they think needs to be done and the directives they are required to implement. The Head of Department in case-study C, who had experience of working in the older universities, commented that distributed leadership was rhetoric rather than reality in his/her experience of working for C business school (Bolden *et al*, 2009).

The Professors (non-Dean posts; Professor B1; Professor A1) are reported separately. This is so that the research can evaluate the role of leadership from an academic leader's perspective

as an alternative to the managerial Dean post-holders who have direct people management responsibilities. Interestingly, this set of respondents was openly critical of their university's leadership and policies across areas including the management of staff, research and teaching. For example, the professors criticized their university's policies, which arbitrarily insist that the business schools must only recruit people who are PhD holders, in preference to candidates who have industry and teaching experience.

The Programme Directors and Principal Lecturers (Principle Lecturer A1; Programme Director A1; Programme Director A2; H of Exec Education B1) are presented as a set which differs from the Heads of Department, in that they do not have direct people management roles, yet they are responsible for organizing their academic programmes and the teaching delivery. As such, these roles surfaced some interesting testimonies regarding what it might mean to be a leader and a follower within a business school context. For example, experienced programme leaders may have a leadership role guiding peers who may be more academically qualified, in teaching delivery, classroom management and course administration.

In the next set, the Senior Lecturers and Lecturer transcripts are gathered together (Senior Lecturer A1; Senior Lecturer B1; Senior Lecturer B2; Senior Lecturer C1). This group reported on their experiences and exposure to the operational outcomes of policy changes, the redundancies and frequent changes of Dean reported in case-studies C and B and, to a lesser extent, A. Consequently, the group provides some interesting perspectives of leadership and followership within contexts of transformational change, uncertainty and instability in their

business schools. Furthermore, this set of respondents shared their candid perspectives as recipients, very often without consultation, of the strategic plans initiated and imposed by their senior management and the impact which those policies are having on their students' learning experiences and course satisfaction. Within their role as followers, the group also commented on their experiences of leadership. In contrast to the managerial leadership reported, there were also indications that this group could express some degree of autonomy as module leaders and tutors with regard to how they organise their work. This autonomy appeared to differ from that of the distributed leadership described in the literature. For example, one of the lecturer respondents in this group reported that s/he had to organise work because of an absence of leadership or guidance by senior colleagues. Accordingly, the three respondents reported a contrasting absence of consultation on strategic direction and policy as well as an absence of guidance on day-to-day operational matters.

The focus group was drawn from former employees of the B case-study. The respondents provided candid testimonies from their perspective as two former programme leaders, reflecting upon what happened to them and many of their former colleagues in case-study B, prior to the appointment of the present Dean. The focus group thereby provides the research with an additional reflective perspective of case-study B by two former employees. The respondents reported on the stress which staff experienced and the negative personal outcomes resulting from their former university's policies, leadership and the business school's regular restructuring /redundancy projects.

6.3 Themes Emerging from the Findings

In the findings presented below, there are emerging themes, which are noted here and are used later as the headings for collating the findings. According to Cassell and Symon (2004, p. 267) a Findings chapter needs to provide: *‘notes about themes, selecting illustrative quotes, producing a coherent ‘story’ of the findings.’* The themes in these findings have been surfaced through reading and re-reading the transcripts and listening to the recordings of the respondents for over a year. The purpose of surfacing the themes is so that they can be critically evaluated in relation to the academic literature in the next chapter analysis chapter (Cassell and Symon, 2004).

There are three themes, which emerged from the findings relating to the research, and which are linked to the research questions and the literature review themes:

- *Transforming leadership in a change context*
- *Instability jeopardising the possibility of followership*
- *Non-distribution of leadership*

The first theme concerned transformational leadership, the second emerged from the context of post-1992 university business schools and the third theme concerned distributed leadership (Bolden *et al*, 2009; Geertz, 1973; Gronn, 2000; Henkel, 2000; 2005). Respondents in Theme 1 reported transformational changes. A significant part of the instability was reported as a consequence of regular reorganisations and redundancies and the impact of the instability on

followership is reported in theme two. The third theme, which emerged out of the primary research, was the non-distribution of leadership. The findings indicated that distributed leadership was not the felt experience of the majority of respondents. The themes are however, not watertight compartments and the reported findings indicated interconnectivity of each theme upon the others.

6.3.1 Theme 1: Transforming Leadership in a Change Context

Dean C3 Previous

The context of this interview is of a post-1992 business school Dean with twenty years of experience in management, within three post-1992 university business schools. The respondent is also a professor who has written in the area of leadership. This interview provides some rich primary data regarding the dissonances between the respondent's knowledge of leadership theories, and their perceptions of leadership and followership in a business school.

Respondent: 'I've had a career where I've assumed leadership responsibility probably for over 20 years in a post-1992 university.'

Dean C Previous' perception is that there are significant limitations to leadership within the business school and dysfunctional management/ staff relationships. Other respondents in the three case studied business schools reported similar perceptions.

Respondent: *'They're [Pro-Vice Chancellors] the 'consiglieri' to use the Mafia terminology. They're the people who sort out the detail that the VC hasn't got time for.'*

The comparison of senior academics to Mafia enforcers indicates a very limited sense of autonomy or self-determination in the role of Dean under a coercive and controlling leadership. In the next extract Dean C3 Previous continues the identification of power by describing the position of Pro-Vice Chancellor in terms of the military. '[A Pro-vice chancellor has] *to go through this tour of duty of being a 'consigliere' or an enforcer.'*

The respondent Dean C3 Previous conveyed a sense of very limited authority in his/her position, contextualised within an environment where directives are communicated from above the level of Dean and then enforced by the Pro-Vice Chancellors. Accordingly, whilst there are transforming changes reported later in his/her interview, s/he does not perceive him/herself to be in control of those decisions pertaining to the business school.

Dean C3 Previous' comment that: *'My research [recognises] the highly contextualised nature of human behaviour'* concurs with the literature regarding the significance of context in evaluating respondent's testimony and the value of context in thick description (Geertz, 1973; Ponterotto, 2006). Dean C3 Previous also reported that s/he has met with difficult leadership situations in several post-1992 university business schools. Interestingly, as an experienced Dean the respondent acknowledges that s/he has received: *'little formal leadership training.'* This is contextually interesting because university business schools provide leadership development for their students. The respondent's comment feeds into the discussion of what

qualifies a person to be a leader in a post-1992 university business school:

Respondent: 'I lived it, I had every single developmental challenge, the boss from hell, the turnaround situation in impossible contexts, undermining colleagues, difficulty in getting respect and I think I'd gone in there with little formal leadership training.'(Dean W3 Previous)

Dean C3 Previous planned early on to leave: *'Within about six months of being there I had worked out my exit strategy.'* Respondents across all three case-studies comment on the high turnover of Deans.

Dean C2 Acting

The context of this interview is that of an acting dean who succeeded Dean C3 Previous. The acting post holder was not offered an interview for the permanent post at the C university business school. However, they were subsequently appointed as the Dean of another business school. S/he subsequently left that post after just over a year. This is one of several respondents who reported that often staff are not developed and promoted within their business schools. It may be more difficult to encourage followership within contexts which do not provide career development opportunities.

Respondent: '[I was an] Acting Dean from September to May.' The short-term approach reported by Dean C2 Acting to leadership is replicated in the other case studied business schools. The Acting Dean had just a few months in which to lead his / her faculty. Consequently, the followers had to adjust to a new leader who may or may not be subsequently appointed to the permanent role. The term permanent as understood in the common usage of the word does not have the same meaning in this context where people are

replaced regularly. Accordingly this has major implications for leadership and followership in a context of instability and insecurity.

Dean C2 Acting observed that the office of Dean does not have much power, indicating that the decision-making is happening elsewhere, with the Vice Chancellor, which is similar to the previous respondent's observations (Dean C3 Previous).

Dean C2 Acting: *'A lot of it does come down to the VC.'*

The respondent indicated that s/he perceives him/herself to be a transformational leader.

Respondent: *'I did consider myself a transformational leader; I changed a lot of policies. I changed committees. I introduced new committees; I changed the membership on committees.'*

However, his/her general testimony is that the transformation is being led at the Vice Chancellor level.

The changes noted by above by Dean C2 Acting are transactional, operational rather than transformational. For example, the changes to committee memberships would only have institutional influence if those committees were granted authority by the university's top leadership. The respondent has already stated that decision-making occurred at the VC level. This testimony may indicate a false consciousness (critical discourse) on the part of the respondent regarding the significance of minor changes to committees whilst s/he was

serving as an '*acting Dean*'.

Dean C1 Current

The context of this respondent is of the newly appointed Dean who has succeeded the previous two post holders, Dean C Previous and Dean C Acting. Accordingly the previous two respondents have been discussing the same context as reported by this third Dean in the C business school.

Dean C1 Current: 'I think as a new dean you probably have six or nine months when people really listen to you because you're the new person, you can benchmark with outside.'

Dean C1 Current's time frame for establishing him/herself is reported as '*six or nine months*'. This indicates a short-term approach to leadership. As shall be seen later in these findings, short term of tenure is commonly reported for deans.

Dean A1 Current

The context of this interview is a business school which has had the same Dean in post for several years. This case-study was selected as a contrast to the C and B cases which have had a succession of Deans in recent years.

The insecurity of Deans is observed by Dean A1 Current and paradoxically that to build an contextual understanding of a business school requires tenure of more than three years.

Respondent: 'I will have been here five years in August, so I'm actually the longest, no, not the longest, there's one longer serving Dean ... I don't think Deans stay in post very long in any university, certainly not in business schools anyway ... As part of the big institution, there are all sorts of things that you don't actually notice for at least a year in post anyway. Then there are things that you can't actually, you don't know how to do anything about for another year, so by the time you've been in post three years, which is sometimes the time that some people stay and you can't really do anything.'

The respondent reported that it takes a number of years to achieve anything as a Dean. This is interesting because in the other two case-studies there has been a succession of Deans, which may thereby place Deans in a situation whereby they are not in post long enough to achieve anything. In contrast the new Dean C Current believed that within three months of taking up the post s/he was in a position to make major changes, including sacking a senior member of staff.

Dean A1 Current indicated that there is both a lack of interest by academics in management positions and that academia does not produce many people who can or want to be leaders. It is also relevant to note that Dean A1 Current employed an academic who had been a Head of Department and '*hated the job*' but was a successful professor. Dean A1 Current also observed that the role of leadership in a post-1992 university context is unattractive to academics due to the propensity for post-1992 universities to be '*process driven*' and '*bureaucratic*'.

Respondent: 'There's a lack of interest in managing people and there's often a lack of interest in systems and processes, post-'92 institutions tend to be probably more process driven, more bureaucratic and that puts even more people off ... so we recruited someone who was Head of Department in a post-'92 institution and quite frankly, [s/he] just hated the job, and [s/he's] one of our best research professors and that's what [s/he's] good at. So there is that element, I think that the pipeline doesn't actually produce that many people that

can do it [academic leadership] or that want to do it.'

Dean B1 Current

The context of this business school is one which has undergone the most changes in terms of Deans and redundancies of academics, in comparison to the W and B case-studies.

Dean B1 Current has had extensive management experience in organizations outside academia. S/he describes the role of Dean as being between '*a rock and a hard place*' in terms of responding to the marketplace, students and the expectations of his/her university's senior leadership. This indicates significant differences between the Dean's perception of how the business school should be developed and that of the university's top management. For example, the Dean B1 Current reflected upon the lack of leadership experience and contextual understanding of what a business school does by the university's senior managers. This Dean decided to take retirement in 2014.

Dean B1 Current: 'I think it's fair to say that some of the members of the senior management team are not particularly experienced and I don't think particularly understand the role of a business school within the portfolio of a university because I do think that business schools are distinct from other types of schools.'

Dean B1 Current was shocked that the previous incumbents of the position of dean were not in post for sufficient time to get to know their staff or, did not invest time in meeting their staff.

Respondent 'One of the things that happened to me, when I was first here I was being taken

around the building, the xxx [academic] was visibly shocked and s/he said, 'Good God, I've never seen the Dean of the business school.' S/he [a lecturer] actually took a photograph of me to prove that s/he'd seen the Dean of the business school.'

The short-term tenure of Deans is also reported in both this B case-study and the previous W case-study.

In this next section the Dean B1 Current reflects upon why a person may be regarded as a leader. This includes both thought leadership and contextual organisational leadership.

Respondent: 'If we refer back to the [transformational, transactional] model I would class his/her [the Vice Chancellor's] style as transactional, s/he acts in his / her own self-interest.'

The Dean in the A study reported that actions may be motivated by personal profile building irrespective of the negative impacts restructuring, which is often a synonym for redundancies, can have on the staff morale.

The next set of respondents is the Heads of Department who are responsible for implementing the policies on behalf of the Dean. The Heads' leadership role is necessarily and in practice closer to their staff than that of the Dean. Accordingly, this group can offer perspectives on the implications of operationalizing those policies, which, as the Deans have already stated, often emanate from managers outside the business school.

The Head of Department in the C case-study reflects upon the staff redundancies which were used to fund the new business school building which was commented upon by Dean C

Previous and the two subsequent Deans in the C case-study.

The H of D in the C study refers to the redundancy cuts as: *'the accountancy of a madhouse.'*

This is a paradoxical metaphor for an institution which teaches others how to manage businesses. To contextualise the respondent's observations, s/he has critically evaluated the financial competence of senior management and their inability to construct and deliver a financially coherent strategy.

H of D C1: 'They've [the senior management] wanted to have cuts across the board, so the business school, despite returning a massive financial surplus, and arguably keeping the whole place afloat, still had to take the same proportion of staffing cuts as other schools. You look quizzical, don't ask me to justify it, I can't. I think it's the accountancy of a madhouse, but it was done, and the business school, along with other schools, was required to take out a certain percentage of staffing costs. The only way you can take staffing costs out is by making people redundant.'

The H of D C1 respondent discusses the differences s/he experienced in transferring from a research university to a post-1992. The respondent indicates that the post-'92s are: *'more managerial'* and *'top down'* than the older universities s/he has worked for.

H of D C1: 'I've been in academia for many years, and I've worked in institutions on either side of the post-'92 divide. But characteristics of the post-'92s really are ones which are generally more managerial, much more top down if you like, and that's certainly the case here.'

It is interesting that the respondent used the word *managerial*, given the context of earlier comments, where according to the respondents; the university's leadership is managerially incompetent in building a financial strategy. The sense of the word here appears to refer to

micro-control of staff in the manner reported by respondents regarding how they do their work rather than to describe managerial efficiency/competence.

H of D A1

This Head of Department came from another pre-1992 university and sees his / her role as administrative and negotiating with colleagues. The H of D A1 respondent defines the H of D role as primarily operational in terms of planning staff workloads, (teaching, module management and research loadings) and *‘dealing with all the problems.’*

The Professors

The professors view their post-1992 business schools from a senior academic lens, though neither respondent has direct people management responsibilities. They provide critical and challenging perceptions of what is happening around them, whilst not being personally involved with direct line management.

Professor A1

Professor A1’s testimony concurs with the observation by Dean K1 that many academics do not want to be in management. The professor stood down as a head of school.

Professor A1: *‘I wouldn’t fancy being dean and I think the job of being dean of a business school in the current climate is not fun.’*

Professor A1 analysed what s/he regards as the transformation of post-1992 business schools from practice informed academia to '*RAE and now the REF*' focused institutions.

Professor A1: 'In a traditional good business school you have a mixture of being able to do it academically and experience of practice, so certainly the staff we've had here who have gone down best with the students and have probably delivered the best results have combined the capacity to teach and communicate with visible signs of experience of having been there [industry experience]. One of the problems we've had in recent years with the RAE and now the REF, there's great pressure to only have people with PhDs, by and largely British students don't do PhDs, so what you've been doing is hiring people from overseas, very nice, very bright, but what previous practical experience do they have in a British business environment? Probably none at all, so you've changed the whole culture. The reasons for it are quite understandable but bonkers, so you've actually removed the means by which the business school can do its job.'

The professor observed that hiring staff that have little to no business experience has '*removed the means by which the business school can do its job.*'

The Professor's observations on the use of PhDs as a prerequisite to appointments in a business school concur with the testimonies of another professor from a different case-study. This is interesting because the research agenda is the domain of the professoriate so they might have been expected to be advocates.

Interestingly, the professor is critically evaluating policy and practice in business schools. S/he also commented that the PhD-only recruitment policy has '*changed the whole culture*' of the business school. The implementation of transforming policies usually requires considerable time and consultation for staff to adapt. The case-studies in this research indicate rapid changes of staff and minimal evidence of staff engagement with the change

process. This concurs with the evidence from the Deans regarding the high turnover of Deans in post.

Professor B1

This professor makes the criticism that policy and structure were changed almost annually. The consequence was instability wherein the business school is in a constant state of flux and disengagement and there is no followership by staff:

ProfessorB1: 'I think probably lack of engagement is the most thing that I've noticed ... I think one of the problems has been lack of the constant structure over the time which does cause quite a lot of problems especially academic leadership where it's changed very frequently and where policies have changed almost annually towards staff.'

Professor B1 observed that the numerous Dean post-holders lacked training in leadership.

ProfessorB1: '[Deans] weren't really ever trained to be leaders and I have a feeling that in one or two cases the motivation for taking the job was just a career move upwards or a step upwards rather than any great commitment to the position.'

This concurs with the Dean of the A's case-study who also commented that some Deans are more interested in their own career development than the outcomes of their actions on their institutions. Professor B1 also comments that the Deans viewed the position as a career move and that many post-holders lacked commitment to the role of Dean. This concurs with Dean C 3 Previous who stated that s/he was organising his/her exit within six months of being in post.

Dean C 3 Previous: *'Within about six months of being there I had worked out my exit strategy,'*

The programme directors are directly responsible for the leadership of their taught programmes. This group have more contact with students than the deans and are thereby more aware of the impact which changes to staff policy, such as the requirement for lecturers to have a doctorate has on the student experience.

Programme Director A1

The frequency of leadership change recurs in all the case-studies. Programme Director A1 is a longer serving academic member with the K University. He comments on the transforming, changing environment.

Programme Director A1: *'[Sighs] We've had different leaders, i.e. different Deans come in ... with very different styles and that does have an effect.'*

Programme Director K2

Programme Director A2 is reflecting upon the transforming changes in the business school and the Dean's motives for change.

Programme Director A2: *'I have a feeling that everything s/he does is ultimately doing for his / her own CV.'*

The respondent regards all of the Dean's changes and policies as being about his/her own career development. This is interesting because it is this respondent's Dean, A1, who commented that other Deans make changes for personal purposes and then leave to avoid the consequential organisational difficulties created by their actions.

Principal Lecturer A1

Principal Lecturer A1 expresses the view that post-1992s and other universities, other than the top twenty, are transforming towards more managerial control. The respondent was indicating that the managerial control of the post-1992s was becoming more common in older universities too.

Respondent: 'The distinction between new and old university will be all soon be gone.'

Head of Exec Ed B

The respondent observes that the numerous transforming structural changes had caused so many staff to leave and that any further loss of academic staff would mean there would be: '*nobody to teach the students*'. This relates to testimony of other respondents who have also observed that structural changes to their business schools have been disruptive to both students and staff. Head of Exec Ed B noted that the selection of numerous deans might have been a deliberate choice by the senior university management to employ self-interested individuals to make transforming changes and then leave. The Dean in case-study A also reports the career orientation of business school Deans.

Respondent: 'The appointment of this particular individual I think was either made in ignorance of his/her management style, or it was made quite deliberately on the assumption that s/he would pursue this particular agenda and then leave very quickly afterwards, so it may well have suited senior management's wish to appoint this person knowing that s/he would effectively wield the knife and then leave very quickly afterwards.'

Respondent: 'Well I think there have now been three similar episodes of Deans arriving and making major changes to staffing, not the present Dean I hasten to add.'

Respondent: 'I think we were all at such a low ebb and we were haemorrhaging people anyway. So I think we all knew that if s/he [The Dean] did try and get rid of any more people there'd have been nobody to teach the students and that would have been it.'

Lecturer A1

The respondent's perception of leadership is that of leaders as remote figures. Accordingly his/her perception of reality is that of a distant leadership, which holds all the power and that s/he is powerless in influencing decisions s/he refers to the academic leadership as the: *very upper echelons.*

Respondent: 'I guess the only consultation I have from the senior management, the very upper echelons of the school, I forget what they call them, but the dean will get together and [s/he] disseminates some financial information and has a bit of an open meeting.'

Senior Lecturer B1

The respondent reports that Deans '*... come in, they want to make their mark and they'll adopt some wild and wonderful strategy that feels they're making their footprint on the Business School and then they jump ship when it all goes pear-shaped and we're left with the aftermath to deal with and that's, that is the general feeling.*'

The respondent reports similar behaviour as described by the Dean in the A case-study. The Deans are reported as using structural and staff profile changes to: *'make their mark'* without considering the personal disruption and organisational damage which their interventions produce. For example:

Respondent: 'The transformation [through redundancies and new recruitment of lecturers with PhDs] to make us a research university where we've traditionally been a vocational university post-1992 where the emphasis has been on industry, knowledge and experience which is more valuable to the students in terms of employability. There is a general body of disgruntled students that feel they're being sold short of that industry link and the experience of the lecturers, how can they [new lecturers] talk about what happens in industry when they've never worked, they've only ever been through their country's education system which is very different from our own anyway?'

The respondent comments that successive Deans have attempted to transform a post-1992 university business school into a research based institution.

The respondent identifies that Deans may assert that they can be transformational leaders during their interviews. Consequently each new incumbent imposes changes within a short time frame, without consultation or consideration of the specific business school context, thereby prompting transformative changes, which produce negative outcomes. Respondents in all three case-studies commented on the attempts by a succession of Deans to transform a post-1992 business school into a research institution by making experienced lecturers redundant and replacing them with new academics who have a doctorate.

Respondent: 'I think partly they're employed [Deans] on the basis of saying they could do this, that and the other to turn the Business School around, lift its credibility internationally

through their interviews and all the things they could do to change and transform the Business School. We've had one in the past who built the new Executive Business Centre [and] as a result, loads of redundancies partially to fund it. Basically they've had problems with the higher execs [the decision to employ a external candidates for senior posts in the Business School].'

The perception that a new business school building was funded by redundancies was also reported in the C case by Senior Lecturer C1: '*loads of redundancies to fund it*'. In the same way the B case respondent's observations echo similar comments at the C case-study regarding a new building. The perception that respondents shared is that staff redundancies pay for new buildings.

Senior Lecturer B2

Senior Lecturer B2 observes that there is a continual turnover of Deans and new lecturers.

The respondent expressed disaffection with the management of his/her university, indicating that those in management did not have knowledge of leadership and motivation theories.

Respondent: '*I don't think we've been effectively managed the whole years I've been here [with the business school] over eight and a half years.'*

Respondent: '*I don't think they actually know [how to lead]. These managers tend not to be in the HR discipline where they might be more familiar with theories of leadership or motivation theories.'*

Senior Lecturer C1

The respondent Senior Lecturer W1 comments that s/he has seen many transforming changes in post-'92 universities during the last ten years. Thus s/he reports a transforming context in

which the trends frequently change.

Respondent: 'Well within nearly ten years I'm in higher education, in particular the post-'92 university institution, I've seen a lot of trends and the trends have changed.'

This concurs with Senior Lecturer B2 who observed that his/her Business School has changed from a teaching focused university by multiple rounds of redundancies, in an attempt to transform it into a research university. The respondent observed that the consequence of these actions was a decline in student experience satisfaction (NSS), which thereby prompted another reappraisal of priorities.

Focus Group of Two Former Programme Leaders from the B Case-study Business School

The focus group represents academics that have left the B case-study and have had time to reflect upon the transformations they experienced within the context of a post-1992 university business school. The participants review the number of Deans, reorganisations and redundancies. The respondents also reflect upon their perceptions of the leadership by Deans which they have experienced. It is indicative of the number of incumbents that they cannot exactly recall how many people were in the Dean's post during a seven-year period.

The actual period of tenure averaged less than a year for each Dean.

Participant 2: 'My last count was nine Deans in seven years.'

Participant 1: 'You might be right, I can't remember totally.'

Participant 2: 'They went through nine Deans in seven years.'

Participant 1: 'That's why I'm saying to you I never saw such a thing as leadership.'

The focus group respondents are reporting that there is no leadership within the case-study B context, apart from one Dean who had demonstrated leadership who was subsequently replaced by a succession of incumbents. The PAR2 respondent attributes the turnover of Deans to the University's senior management not knowing what they are looking for in a Dean.

Participant 2: 'I think that nine Deans in seven years is indicative that management above has no idea what they're looking for, and is not able to make correct selection procedures. The last person I thought was capable of showing leadership was in fact the first of those nine, and after s/he left, all the others I saw no leadership.'

Participant 1: 'I agree, I agree.'

6.3.2 Theme 2: Instability Jeopardising the Possibility of Followership

Dean C3 Previous

Dean C3 Previous observed that instability was caused by a disruptive rate of change.

Respondent: 'I had to make an enormous number of changes in a short period of time, so leading in that context you have the task focus, the pressure on the task and delivery is enormous.'

S/he also indicated an underlying stream of functionalism jeopardising followership: 'we're

getting this managerial-ism in higher education, which turns people off. S/he recalled his / her reminder to the academic staff that they were not working: *'in a basket case business school'*. Accordingly the respondents' perception of the staff's sense of the Business School is such that they needed to be reassured that they were not working in a: *'basket case'* context. The respondent's statement has an underlying concern that staff may consider that the leadership's direction and decision making does not contain any rational sense. Hence the followers may regard their leadership's behaviour as nonsensical, irrational and incompetent and thereby creating a *'basket case'* business school.

Dean C3 Previous observes that all of the business schools are in a transforming environment with consequential context of instability.

Respondent: 'Very few business school deans now are in a different context, you've got a very radically changing environment, be it private or public sector school, post-'92 or pre-'92 and everybody's facing enormous change agendas. And I always describe [the W case-study business school] as like riding a tiger backwards, it's very fierce, it goes very fast, you don't know where it's going and you can't get off and I felt that's just the university.'

The simile likening the role of Dean in a post-1992 business school to: *'riding a tiger backwards'* conveys a frightened lack of personal control over the contextual environment.

This evokes a context in which Dean C Previous did not see himself / herself as a leader. Instead, his / her perception of reality is one in which s/he has no sense of control of the direction, policies and actions to be implemented. Consequently, the Dean's metaphor describes a situation where they are not able to exercise leadership. Instead, the Dean is being subjected to changes over which s/he has no influence, though s/he is required to implement

changes. Consequently, the Dean is a follower who is not consulted or included in the development of strategy and policy. As such in there is neither leadership nor followership in the sense of interaction between academics to formulate an agreed set of key actions points and then work collectively to achieve them.

Dean C3 Previous describes how the University's decision to rehouse the Business School led to a requirement to reduce expenditure by 17% in one academic year, resulting in a set of academic redundancies. Initially, Dean C Previous's perception was that the cost of the building would be paid for by an increase in student numbers. Dean C3 Previous was not included in the decision to fund the construction project by staff redundancies. However, the extract below indicates that colleagues had cautioned the Dean as to the threat to jobs.

Respondent: '[The] new building...people couldn't believe it, they thought 'right well where the money comes from for all of this, who's going to be made redundant to fund this?' [And I said] well the university has committed and the budget money yes it does come indirectly from us and we probably will have to take more students'.

Respondent: 'We eventually got a commitment to spend about £20 million on the site. Then of course last year there were the cuts that were required and they were absolutely appalling because there was me trying to build a business school and expected to achieve a 17% cut in one year in budget, in expenditure, so that was horrific.'

The respondent thereby demonstrates a lack of budgetary awareness regarding the planning requirements for large building projects. Furthermore, the if the Dean had conducted a student numbers trend analysis for the previous four years s/he would have recognised that it was completely unrealistic to think that it would be possible to fund a £20 million building

project by increasing the student intake, as the respondent initially thought. This thereby raises interesting questions of what it means to be a leader or follower in a post 1992 university. This respondent is evidently not leading events, nor managerial aware of building in costs to budgets and student trend analysis projections.

Dean C2 Acting

The respondent Dean C2 Acting observed that the changes are so disruptive that business schools have become dysfunctional. This indicates that the changes in post-1992 business schools are jeopardising followership.

Respondent: ‘Oh, I think several people [Deans] would talk about dysfunctionality in their business schools or universities. I think that place [the W case-study] is a particular bad example.’

To contextualise this respondent’s observations within a thick description of the situation, s/he succeeded the Dean who had been in post when the new building was partly funded by sacking academics in the business school. The Dean C2 Acting regards the W case as: *‘a particularly bad example’* of the post-1992 business school operating in a dysfunctional manner.

The disruptions to students’ studies as their lecturers go through the process of redundancy and the disturbances to the stability and security of employees would degrade the learning and teaching environment. Moreover, the respondent indicated that a number of post-1992 university business schools were in a similar dysfunctional situations. The reported causes of

these failures appear to be the self-inflicted outcomes of incompetent leadership. The research has thereby surfaced potentially major flaws in the selection of leaders in post-1992 universities.

Dean C1 Current

In contrast to his / her two predecessors, Dean C1 Current saw the changes to the business school building as an opportunity to change academic patterns of behaviour:

Dean C1 Current: 'I'm interested in using the changes in the building [the W case-study] to influence behaviours. I would describe, the business school's been established only for three years. I've got an opportunity to decide for myself how to go about it.'

The new building in the C case-study was initiated during the tenure of Dean C3 Previous. The present Dean was not involved in that process. Dean C1 Current's perception is that the Business School, in common with the building in which it is housed, is a new work in progress. By implication this indicates that the respondent does not consider the Deans who preceded him/her to have overseen a fully formed business school. The Dean's reflection that this provides the '*opportunity to decide for myself*' reveals that the decision making which s/he envisages is unlikely to be distributive or inclusive of academic colleagues. More disturbingly, for a person with responsibility for many colleagues, in a subsequent unguarded reply to a question about leadership the respondent surfaced his/her lack of managerial competence.

Interviewer: *'From a leadership perspective how do you make the decisions about direction and the change?'*

Respondent: *'I'm making it up as I go along is the honest answer.'*

The respondent's high level of confidence contrasts with his/her admission about making up decisions. For example, with reference to the respondent's new strategic plan for the business school s/he commented that: *'I drafted an international strategy, it took a day or so to do.'* Remarkably, this was after s/he had been in post for just three months. By way of contrast, the longest serving Dean in the A case-study observed that it took a number of years to get to know a business school before significant changes could be formulated.

Dean C1 Current did offer some critical commentary upon the criteria used by some universities to select leaders: *'... [the] current belief that all leaders should be professors, which I think is utter nonsense because normally research is an individualistic process, which requires a different set of skills from leading.'* This view is similar to other respondents in the three case-studies that research capability is not necessarily an indicator of leadership competence. Interestingly, the respondent is cognisant that research capability is different to leadership, but does not appear to reflect upon the need to have leadership experience. If someone who is a professor is not, according to the respondent, necessarily qualified to be in management, neither is the respondent, who failed to attain a professorship in his/her previous institution.

Dean A Current

The rapid changes in post-1992 business schools discussed in the introductory chapter were found to have increased student numbers, and here Dean A Current reflected upon how this influences some business schools. More recently the increase in student fees has meant that students who are paying much more for their education are thereby more vocal about the teaching they receive.

Dean K Current: 'Well, because students are paying and students are fewer on the ground, so you just need to make sure they're happy. But there are some, and not just post-'92 but the majority of post-'92 that have been the Ryanair of education ... it doesn't matter how badly you treat your customers, there's always a supply of new customers.'

This view that the student learning experience is not important may have been an unintended outcome of the pressures on academics to produce research, which is commented on by several respondents across all the case-studies. The contrary demands upon leaders and followers in academia in a transforming environment may have contributed to the dysfunction in business schools, which was also observed by Dean C Acting. The reported instability and impermanence of employment continuity may also be impacting on student experiences whereby unhappy academics may provide less support and attention whilst they focus on the personal consequences of the next restructuring programme.

The Dean B1 Current

Dean B1 Current offered some indications of a distributed leadership approach, thereby

encouraging followership.

Respondent: 'Well I'd like to think that my style is a reasonable consultative one, I need to work through persuasion, through consultation, through engagement with people and what I try to do with my staff is to encourage them to accept responsibility and I try and pass responsibility down to them so that instead of me making all the decisions, and inevitably I'm not going to make the right decisions all the time, or even some of the time, I involve and engage them in that decision making process.'

The Dean's testimony indicates that s/he is trying to change the leadership approach within a context wherein Deans are regularly replaced. The followers may thereby regard his/her attempts at distributed leadership as a short-term interlude, during over a decade of different Dean post-holders, restructuring and redundancies. This indicates a context where trying to establish stable leadership and followership is challenging. In 2014, the Dean B Current left his / her post in the Business School.

Dean B1 Current observed that there are tensions between new staff appointees and existing staff. The newer staff had been appointed for their research credentials, whilst earlier appointees were selected for their professional experience and teaching competence. Most recently the fall in the Business School's National Student Survey ratings has returned the focus to teaching and the student experience. It is interesting to compare the reported fall in student satisfaction in the B case to the consequences of treating students without care as described by the Dean in the A case: *'the Ryanair of education'*. The leadership of these two universities appear to be unaware of the reputational consequences of their management strategies.

Dean B1 Current: 'One particular group is well established, long serving and probably teaching-orientated. There's a newer tranche of people who've recently been recruited who see themselves as researchers and they refer to themselves as 'researchers'.'

This is an interesting report of a division in strategic focus within business school department. It is, of course, possible to have some academics concentrating on teaching and others upon research. However, the reported tensions may be about parity of esteem and career prospects in both the particular business school and the university sector. The Dean in the B case has commented that the university's promotions panel prioritise research publications over teaching and management competence. The discrimination against staff whose major contributions are to build the student experience and manage the teaching programme is a serious leadership failure in a post-1992 business school, which is predominantly funded by student fees.

Dean B1 Current notes that in *'ten years [the Business School has] had twelve different Deans'*. Additionally, the Dean also commented on the lack of competence of those Deans and the consequential instability in the business school. *'The degree of incompetence [of some of the Deans] was extraordinary.'* The consequential tumult and instability caused by the repeated selection of incompetent Deans indicates a senior leadership failure to select people with leadership capability. Each of the twelve incumbents of the post of Dean prompted new instabilities as the business school strategy moved its focus from teaching to research, which failed to establish a research community because instability jeopardised the sense of followership and collegiality. Whereupon the declining student satisfaction with

staff who, the respondents commented, were not able to teach nor interested in teaching, led to a partial return to supporting teaching quality. This was however stymied by the University's top leadership's insistence that newly appointed lecturers should have a PhD as a prerequisite; much to the chagrin of Dean B Current, who is trying to improve the Business School's teaching performance by selecting academics whose primary interest is teaching. This also supports the observation that the succession of Deans in the B case were not allowed to act as leaders in the sense of determining a strategy which would work for the business school.

The insecurity for academic staff, which has permeated the B case culture following several rounds of redundancies, has degraded followership. As new Deans arrived, made their attempts at changes and then left, usually through dismissal, the academic staff has come to view each new permanent or acting Dean – with such permanence as permanence has in this context – as a transitory person with a new set of impositions on a context for which s/he would have little awareness. Accordingly, instability produced a systemic failure in leadership and followership relations.

Respondent: 'There had been numerous previous incumbents in this role [Dean], some of whom had only stayed for a year or less, with various people serving in interregnum when of course you can't actually do anything because you haven't got the role, you're just simply there to mind the shop. It's something staggering like people who've been here ten years have had 12 different deans, it's absolutely incredible. So very much a lack of stability, a lack of clear strategy, lack of clear direction, and I have to say some very indifferent quality managers, the degree of incompetence was extraordinary.'

The pressure to become research-active is encapsulated by a lecturer who told the new Dean

that s/he had *'only registered for PhD because I'd get sacked if I didn't ... I mean really extraordinary things and the vehemence with which people made these statements and the extreme nature of the comments that I received really, really shook me and it really demonstrated to me the depth of feeling and actually the very low morale that existed in the business school.'*

The academics comments to the current Dean in the B case included: *'... a war zone ...'*, *'... low morale ...'* and an academic studying for a PhD because his / her perception was that s/he would *'get sacked'* if they did not enrol on a doctoral programme. The perceptions of reality (constructivism) which are conveyed in Dean B current's comments indicate a dysfunctional organisational context, jeopardised by instability and the consequential disengagement instead of followership.

H of D C1

The respondent reflects that the combination of redundancies, fear and the policy of not promoting internally discourages followership and builds resentment. The messages from the W case-study are similar to that of the B case-study. The existing academics are not promoted and therefore become *'resentful'* about the lack of personal development opportunities.

H of D C1: *'The Vice Chancellor would deny that, but the truth is there have been*

compulsory [redundancies] in all but name. And there's also the fear that, well if it happened to them it could happen to me. So people are disturbed about that, and people are resentful about that. I think there are also issues around the ability to be promoted: in other words – how is good performance recognised? The university seems to have got itself currently in a bit of a bind here locally about the kind of non-promotion scheme that it has in place now, which is more or less designed to stop anybody being promoted, and that eventually that just builds up resentment. So people say, "Well why should I want to do a good job because I'm not going to get any reward?" They're not going to get any more money, they're not going to get promotion, so there's issues around that.'

The situation prompting this respondent's observations about the lack of promotions in the C case-study, has similarities to that resulting from the succession of external Deans and new lecturer appointments which have been imposed upon the B case-study. The perceptual sense of reality that appears common to the respondents in B and W cases is that there are no prospects for promotion or recognition. The reported senior management actions further degrade the followership, within a context where collegiality is ostensibly considered beneficial, yet leadership actions degrade the possibility of followership.

H of D A1

Respondent: 'I think the new Vice Chancellor's driving change through at quite a pace, and at several different levels, including who the senior management team is, and the restructuring.'

The respondent has noted that the new Vice Chancellor is driving changes through the

university. The style of leadership reported indicates that the senior management is using its centralised power when described as '*driving change*' instead of using inclusion and distributed leadership. The restructuring is destabilising the Business School through a simultaneous drive for change at several levels of management.

Professor A1

Professor A1 comments on the decision to remove a Dean and replace him/her with another who was subsequently found to be financially incompetent. In both cases the removal of a competent Dean to be replaced by a financially incompetent person created instability and reduced respect and followership.

Respondent: '[a previous Dean] was forcibly removed by the vice-chancellor because the vice-chancellor wanted to impose modularisation against the unanimous opposition of the faculty, expressed through its dean.'

Respondent: 'The Dean [who replaced the Dean who was forcibly removed] was the Dean for four years but it didn't really work, [s/he] didn't spot a major deficit for example.'

The reported lack of managerial competence by the second Dean concurs with the critical comments of several respondents across the cases that academics are being appointed on the basis of choosing research performance over the knowledge and skills to teach or manage resources and people. This is, of course, fine if the job role is predominantly as a researcher. However, for management posts the respondents are reporting systemic failures of leadership judgement, and inappropriate selection criteria.

Professor B1 identifies the high turnover of staff turnover: *'four Vice Chancellors and I don't know how many Pro-Vice Chancellors.'* The low staff retention creates instability in this context. Professor B1 also comments on the recruiting policy, which was also criticised by the Dean in B case-study.

Respondent: *'[Recruiting more and more people with doctorates is] negative because a lot of these people have not got teaching experience. In many cases, English is not their first language and we've had problems because of that with members of staff and I think that it has been quite a negative, negative situation.'*

The professor's criticisms of academic recruitment policies are replicated in all of the case studied business schools.

Professor A1 expressed disengagement with a business school, which does not encourage followership through engagement.

Respondent: *'Many business schools have not got permanent heads of academic area. I think it's endemic throughout the sector. I think the problem here is that because of frequent policy changes from the management, nobody really wants a junior management position.'*

The leadership instability noted above has been highlighted through all three case-studies.

The professor's observations are that the issues s/he has highlighted are: *'endemic throughout the sector,'* which surfaces leadership failures at multiply levels across institutions.

Programme Director A1

Programme Director A1 indicated that changes in policies in the K case are: *'coming down'* from the Vice Chancellor rather than the Dean. The term *'coming down'* suggested a

perception of reality which views decisions and power being expressed through a hierarchy in which the respondent or the Dean has no influence.

Programme Director A2

The Programme Director A2 reflects upon his/her Dean's motives and attitude to the business school, which brings about destabilising changes there.

Respondent: 'I feel that there is no genuine interest. [by the Dean] To cut a long story short, there is no genuine interest in this school and the people in it; it's more like interest to the extent to what outside people could say about him/her because of some things happening here. I'm really honest!'

The respondent's critique of his/her Dean's disinterest in people within the business school evidences a lack of trust in the leadership. The A case was selected because it has a long serving Dean and could thereby provide a contrast to the instabilities of the B and C cases, which have been subjected to multiple changes of Dean and management teams. Yet even in the relatively stable K case, there is distrust as to the motivations of the Dean.

H of Exec Education B1

H of Exec Education B1 concurs with other respondents who indicated the hierarchical structure and control by their top management.

Respondent: 'I think a number of colleagues [are] being micromanaged on a one to one basis ... I find this place quite hierarchical and not a particularly sociable place ... I think a lot of colleagues are actually quite surprised if they're ever asked what do you think about something or brought into a decision making process. So I think there is just a general

expectation here that managers make decisions and communicate them to you rather than involving staff in general in that process.'

H of Exec Education B1 reports the hierarchical managerial style of leadership of one of their numerous Deans as creating significant instability and distress. Furthermore, there was here a disinterest for the well-being of the people in the faculty. This is also reported by respondents in the other two universities, with reference to redundancies and multiple restructuring of staff.

Respondent: 'There was really very little concern for the wellbeing or the sensibilities of the people that [the Dean] had come here to manage. [S/he] was the kind of person that really should never have been in a university as I think of universities, as communities of scholars, which in my experience tend to be largely self-managing, whereas s/he obviously had a very managerialist approach to doing the job.'

Respondent: '... [A Dean said] "I can't take hospitality from people that I might have to sack" which I think pretty well summed up [the] approach to how s/he was going to manage the school.'

The Dean's (one of the numerous past incumbents) insensitive assertion that s/he would not socialise with colleagues because s/he may want to 'sack' them demonstrates a remarkable lack of interpersonal communication skills or leadership competence. When viewed from within the thick descriptions provided by respondent who have reported the failings of several incompetent Deans, the comments are even more inappropriate to the contextual environment. The Dean left within a year. This further surfaces major failings in leadership selection and managerial competence in the B case-study.

Senior Lecturer B1

Respondent: 'People are pretty worn out and fed up with it all. Deans haven't stayed long, then they go and everything's up and chaotic and then quite often in the past they've [Deans] been invisible.'

Respondent: 'A mixed bag [Deans and management] [laughs] we've had some very autocratic leaders.'

The respondent's use of examples such as: 'worn out', 'fed up with it all' and 'everything is up and chaotic' replicates the reported experiences expressed by many respondents, particularly in the B and W cases. The instability caused by multiple management changes appears to have disrupted the possibilities for leadership and followership.

Senior Lecturer B2

Senior Lecturer B2 reflects upon the loss of experienced lecturers through numerous rounds of redundancies. The respondent also notes that many of the new entrant lecturers have little interest in teaching. The leadership above the Dean in this case-study have insisted that new appointees have PhDs and are research-focused.

Respondent: 'I'm now one of the oldest members here, not only in age [respondent in early forties] but in tenure. It didn't used to be. It's partly because of voluntary redundancies – we've had at least three rounds – we're having a high turnover of staff because they're sold down the river, said this is a research-led university, we'll be like a Russell Group and you're mainly going to be doing research, and that's what we're bringing you on board for. They [new lecturers] come in and find out that it's mainly a teaching university and then they stay here for about a year.'

The respondent indicates that the imposition of a research-focused strategy by the university's leadership has failed to create a research university, and the management's

concern has turned to retrieving the falling student satisfaction ratings. The reported plan by the senior leadership to convert a post-1992 university into a research-intensive member of the Russell Group of universities is an unrealistic aspiration. Not one post-1992 has been invited to join the top set of universities. The notion that they might become an Exeter, Birmingham or Oxford by hiring new staff with PhDs is a flawed strategic objective, given the instability and high staff turnover and low morale reported by academics in this case-study.

Respondent: *'Eight, at least. They come and go. And a few interims.'*

Respondent: [On the influence of the student satisfaction survey] *'They [Deans] like to stamp their authority on our ideas and they don't listen. In a sense we're going round full circle, I think. It was predominantly just a teaching university, then it was all about research, and now it's this confusion now, which is ... well, basically mainly teaching because with the change in context, bums on seats, nine thousand pound tuition fees, it's all about the student experience and quality, i.e. teaching.'*

The B case respondent lecturer's comments concur with his/her current Dean with regard to the need to focus on improving teaching in the Business School. However the strategy is reportedly unclear. For example, *'then it was all about research, and now it's this confusion now,'* Again, this observation collaborates the criticisms of policy by the current B case Dean that s/he is required to appoint staff because they have a doctorate, yet what the business

school has lost through redundancies and urgently needs to appoint academics with interest and experience in teaching students.

Senior Lecturer C1

Senior Lecturer C1 reported that there have been three Deans in recent years. This concurs with the other respondents in the W case and also respondents' experiences of instability in the B cases. It is interesting that respondents in different universities are reporting such similar experiences of leadership failure and instability. This indicates that, as reported by respondents, there are systemic failures in the post-1992 sector in the selection of people for senior leadership.

Focus Group

The group contains two former programme leaders from the C case business school

Participant 1: 'It was just like being in a washing machine the whole time, never knowing when anyone was going to open the door. [Laughter] It was just like that. For me, my physical health was really awful when I left, really, really awful. I was just so worn out from it all.'

The respondent reports that the disaffection and distress produced by the restructuring eliminated those who may have been able to take on leadership responsibilities and the commitment of followers to step up into leadership posts. The sense of loss of control and relentless disturbance is evident in the respondent's '*washing machine*' metaphor. Whatever the objectives or motivations of those who were in leadership might have been, the respondents found the changes disaffecting and dysfunctional.

Participant 1: 'They [managers] had a problem getting anybody to do anything, because everybody was so disaffected. I worked through three redundancy scenarios myself, and the effects of that, you can go on for years afterwards, the health issues, the stress from it all. People were so permanently stressed out. So really, they couldn't get people to do the jobs. 'Participant 1: 'I actually doubt leadership actually exists – I've got to be very honest – completely in higher education.'

Participant 1: Because you're not supposed to question, you're just supposed to do, and that's why I'm saying to you I doubt leadership exists. Somebody's written a handbook, you open that page of the handbook, you follow it. You turn over the next page, you do it.

The respondent's perception of reality (constructivism) is that leadership does not exist in HEIs. Alternatively; this may be a 'false consciousness' (critical discourse), on the part of the respondent. Whilst s/he may not recognise what is occurring as leadership, evidently someone is directing the redundancies and the hiring and dismissing of numerous Deans.

It may therefore be that the kind of leadership which is occurring is dissonant with the respondent's perception of what leadership should be. Accordingly, the respondent reports that leadership does not exist, whilst his/her testimony also reports the use or abuse of power, and the imposition of policies. These interventions indicate the existence of a number of people who are orchestrating events, albeit via the use of autocratic power, enforcement

through systems of control and the threat of redundancies.

The respondent thereby echoes the perception of hierarchy expressed by Dean C Previous who described the Pro Vice Chancellors in his/her university as '*enforcers*.' Accordingly, the respondents are reporting autocratic non-consultative leadership. This will be reflected upon in the next chapter in relation to the literature. The leadership described by the respondent is autocratic. It is also interesting to observe how it is reportedly failing in each of the cases and

criticised comprehensively by respondents in teaching, management and professorial positions.

Participant 2: 'Having looked at the research on balance there's a slightly negative correlation between teaching and research. A policy that you should do all of those is ill-informed; it has not been informed by research. Therefore, I had to come to the personal conclusion that those decisions were entirely ideological, that somebody was pursuing their own ambition, they were taking ideological decisions, sometimes in the face of existing research, in order to impose their own view of the world.'

The view of leadership in post-1992 business schools where senior managers pursue personal ambition over organisational requirements is also the perception of the Dean from the A case-study and Dean Previous in the C case-study. The current Dean in Case-study B reported preferring to have as little contact as possible with her/his line manager, the Pro Vice Chancellor. Accordingly, respondents report a context which is permeated by fear and distrust, in different case studied business schools from both the leader and follower perspectives.

6.3.3 Theme 3: Non-distribution of Leadership

The Deans, with the exception of Dean B Current, tended towards low levels of distributed leadership. The respondents also report a lack of opportunity for promotion inside their business schools and a focus on research status as a selection criterion for teaching and management posts irrespective of competence in teaching and or management.

Dean C3 Previous

The respondent observed that academics do not want to be involved in decisions: *'for many people strong leadership is being told what to do.'* This comment indicated an assumption that academic colleagues do not wish to participate in leadership. Moreover that people prefer not to be consulted. This is contrary to the evidence gathered from other respondents in the cases. For example, several respondents have criticised the lack of consultation and engagement by Deans and the senior university leadership.

Dean C2 Acting

Respondent: 'I think it's very difficult to ever get a consensus in a university setting. And I think, therefore, the two might be in a bit of conflict, this idea of consensus versus leadership.'

The respondent's comments indicate a perception that s/he does not seek consensus. This attitude to non-distributed leadership is commonly reported by respondents.

Respondent: 'We didn't have staff representatives on committees because we didn't think that was necessarily appropriate, and I still don't think that's appropriate. So people are there because of their role and function, really.'

The statement above rejects distributive staff involvement on committees and surfaces a hierarchical perception of leadership as a matter for people who have a specific leadership *'role and function'*. Thereby only people who hold formal management positions sit on this Dean's Business School committees.

Dean C1 Current

The respondent offers some frank views upon his/her lived experiences of leadership. The culture of collegiality and by association, consensus is reported here as an impediment to: *'begin to move forward.'*

Respondent: 'I think it links back to the history of universities, the fact that they're collegial, that traditionally a dean's role rotated, so you'd be dean for three or five years and then go back to one of the crowd, if you disciplined somebody and then you're going back it creates certain behaviours. And now I think things have moved on so leadership in universities is more managerial, which people complain about, but it means we can actually begin to move forward but there's 100 years of culture and practice to move forward from.'

The dysfunctional business schools reported by respondents contradict this respondent's assertion that leadership, which is *'more managerial'*, enables universities to *'move forward.'* Indeed, many respondents report an absence of contemporary managerial competence. Instead, the leadership behaviours reported are hierarchical, non-consultative. Furthermore there are numerous changes in post-holders and policies. This indicates deliberate non-distribution of leadership in the cases studied by a succession of leadership post-holders. The research has therefore surfaced the possibility that the leadership problems reported here are likely to be more systemic than that of incompetence by one or two individuals.

Dean A1 Current

Dean A1 Current also reflected upon the non-distribution of leadership. For example, internal promotions are less likely than external appointments. His/ her observations are similar to Dean W Current's, who also commented that there is a lack of promotions from within a business school. The respondents' comments indicate either an absence of staff development

in business schools or a false consciousness that making external appointments is preferable to developing people.

Respondent: 'I think also it's terribly tough to be promoted internally, I mean, it can be ruthless being promoted internally and I often think about that myself, I don't think, had I been in this institution I would have been promoted to my job [Dean]. Because I was an external candidate, I ... that gave me an advantage.'

Dean B1 Current

The policy of selecting staff primarily because they have a PhD or research publications (for positions wherein the job role is not primarily to research) is reported by several respondents, including Deans, Professors and Lecturers, as an impediment to selecting teaching and management staff. This respondent, Dean B 1 Current, expressed frustration about 'constraints that are placed upon us', which impose the requirement to employ staff with PhDs. This indicates that s/he is not formulating policy, but instead being required to implement decisions, which are created outside the business school. This further indicates a deliberate choice by senior management not to distribute leadership decision making, even with the Faculty Deans.

Respondent: 'There are constraints that are placed upon us, which I find extremely frustrating, for example one of the constraints is that everybody we recruit must have a PhD. We require people who are professionally qualified in those respects but very often they don't have PhDs, so we're between that rock and a hard place that I mentioned earlier, I'm required to recruit people with PhDs but the people I need don't have PhDs. So we go through some shadow dancing in order that I can enable certain people to change their minds with grace and dignity without being seen to back down on a fundamental statement of policy.'

Respondent: 'The policy has been set by the senior management team of the university, which

is a group of five people.'

Respondent: 'That would be the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice Chancellor, the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Finance and the Vice-Chancellor himself'.

The list of senior management presented who have taken it upon themselves to make recruitment decisions does not include any of the faculty Deans, Professors, Heads of Department or Programme Directors. Accordingly they are formulating recruitment strategies without including the people who will be employing the staff in research, teaching and management.

In this next section of transcript the Dean reflects on how to address the issues regarding the distribution of posts and increasing followership.

Respondent: 'Well I would recognise the role of teaching more prominently alongside that of research, we say that we value teaching and research equally but we promote the researchers and when you get to the promotion panels, and I sit on lots and lots of promotion appointment panels, what do people turn to? Your list of publications. And yes we want people to be good teachers and yes we look for feedback and all of that but if your papers and outputs aren't up to snuff then you're not going to get the job, simple as that. We actually disadvantage those who are excellent teachers and excellent administrators. If I think back to my previous institution, which was a red brick university, the director of research at the school didn't have a PhD; the Deputy Vice Chancellor didn't have a PhD; so they don't worry so much about PhDs and so on. So I think as a post-'92 we're a little too conscious of that [PhDs] and that drives our thinking perhaps a little more than it should.'

The Dean has indicated the possibility that a lack of self-value in post-1992 universities culture might be influencing their recruitment choices in a manner, which is not so prevalent in other parts of the university sector such as red brick universities, which have been established for a longer period of time. The failure to distribute leadership is a recurring

message reported by respondents with serious consequences to the teaching and learning environment. For example, the case-study B staff indicated a fall in student satisfaction to the extent that the senior leadership began to reconsider the value of teaching, whilst nevertheless insisting upon the pursuit of a research led strategy.

Dean C1 Current

The Dean C1 current reported his/her decision to dismiss a: *'very senior and vocal member'* of staff and replace him/her by an external person to *'come up with something.'* The use of the positional power by a new Dean to remove an established senior colleague would have repercussions and an impact on followership for other staff and their perception of the leader-follower relationship. The Dean reported that s/he had used the same management approach in his / her previous business school: *'in that role I actually did get rid of a professor.'*

It is striking that whilst Deans in the case-studies report having little if any influence on policy that this new Dean has the managerial latitude to dismiss a: *'very senior and vocal member'*. It may be that the insertion of the word *'vocal'* surfaces a dislike for people who vocalise alternative perspectives to those espoused by the current Dean. The dismissal would also communicate to academic staff that the leadership establishment does not countenance dissent.

Dean A1 Current

Dean A1 Current reflects on the short tenure of Deans and how that might influence a Dean's behaviour and the potential negative outcomes of short-termism on the business school's

policies and procedures: *'Some people have the slash and burn approach as well, where they just go away and do something very dramatic and then run away before everything, all the pieces fall back down'* [laughs].

Respondent: 'I think it's career, it's career-orientation [by Deans]. I don't think anyone's as Machiavellian enough to go and do some damage just so that they can make a noise and get promoted. But there is an element sometimes where you just go in and do something and if it doesn't work, well, it doesn't matter because you're no longer there, but the net result of the institution is still the same, so there is that.'

The short-termism and insecurity of tenure cited by the Dean is reportedly the cause of the regular re-organisations and structuring so that senior managers can be seen to: *'... do something and if it doesn't work, well, it doesn't matter because you're no longer there.'* In a context wherein a year in post is common, the pressures to have something new on their CVs to offer the next employer may place pressures on incumbents to make changes to be seen to be doing something. Moreover, the post-holders will need to be searching for a new job just a few months after they have been appointed. Dean C3 also reported a short-term perception of his/her tenure by stating that s/he had commenced a new job search after being in post for six months.

Dean A1 Current attributed some of the reason for short-termism upon the targets set by the post-1992 Vice Chancellors, for example:

Respondent: 'So some Vice Chancellors will want a Dean to come in and they'll give them fairly unfeasible targets. I mean, to influence the NSS [National Student Satisfaction Survey] scores, and you'd need a minimum of three years to make any sort of difference. So some

Deans are tasked with impossible targets.'

The need to improve student satisfaction levels was also noted in the B case.

Dean B1 Current

Dean B1 Current's comments relating to hierarchy are replicated in both of the other case-studies where the Deans noted that their Vice Chancellors and senior managers impose decisions upon them. This indicates that Deans and business school academics in the case studied post-1992 universities are implementers of decisions made by their vice chancellors and university senior management team. Distributed leadership does not appear to be evidenced even with senior appointees.

Respondent: 'And those people [the top five management team] have devised the next six-year plan for the university and within that they've established what they call key performance indicators. One of those KPIs is that 70% of staff should have a PhD, and this is a hangover really from the former post-'92 days when, as a strongly teaching institution, I think only just over 20% of staff had PhDs, so this is part of perhaps the insecurity that post-'92s feel, that they have to boost up the PhD population, and this is applied as a blanket requirement without any consideration.'

Dean B1 Current comments on his / her contrasting experiences of redbrick and post-1992 university approaches to qualifications for appointments and promotions. This is interesting because the changes executed by twelve Deans in ten years removed the teaching-focused staff in favour of new appointees with PhDs. According to Dean B Current, the newer appointees perceive themselves as researchers rather than teachers. The Dean's recommendations would return the Business School to its teaching and student-focused

status, prior to the several rounds of redundancies. Interestingly, the B case-studies research output as reviewed by *Times Higher Education* is lower in 2014 than it was prior to the ten years of management changes and redundancies.

Respondent: 'Yes, well this is actually my first experience of working in a post-'92 university. And we talk a lot about the student experience and we're always very concerned about the NSS, the National Student Survey, but it's one of the great paradoxes I suppose of a university in that we're very concerned about student experience but actually we promote people for research. So there's a great mismatch in managing an institution like this in that the rewards don't necessarily promote the appropriate behaviours.'

The career reasoning of staff in the B case-study is surfaced here in that the promotions are based on research outputs rather than teaching quality. Given the context of redundancies and restructuring the academics would be mindful that many of their colleagues were made redundant and replaced by research focused appointees.

H of D C1

The respondent observed that the senior academic managers lack leadership training and development. This is an interesting contrast in an environment which espouses the benefits of learning and professional development. *'They [VCs, pro-VCs and Deans] don't know any better. I mean that in all seriousness, because they've never received [training as leaders].'*

Respondent: 'Industry is putting a lot of time and effort into leadership, and into participation and a much more consultative approach, managers as coaches, managers as facilitators and so on. That's the big emphasis and has been for a generation. That's all bypassed our education. They don't engage in staff, in CPD, they don't engage in management and leadership training and development, they don't have their eyes opened to the other possibilities.'

You might be a PhD or an expert in ancient Greek or geography or whatever it might be, in what way does that fit you to become a chief executive of a multi million pound organisation.

The respondent highlighted the lack of management training in HE and the absence of distributed leadership.

H of D A1

The respondent, who is a head of department, reports his/her sense of powerlessness and the absence of distributed leadership. For example, the respondent states that there is a '*non promotion scheme*' whereby academics are not promoted from within the business school. This issue has also been reported in the interview with Dean A1 Present. Additionally Dean C2 Acting was not interviewed for the permanent post of Dean, yet left to become the Dean at another university and was promoted to Professor. In accordance with the patterns found in this research, Dean C2 Acting left that new Dean post in less than two years.

H of D A 2

The respondent appears to unconsciously contradict him / herself by at first asserting that: '*you can't run a department unless you have the financial autonomy*' and then going on to explain that '*I always have to make a case to my Dean and I think if you make a sensible case there is no reason why your request for funding won't be provided.*' Hence, if the respondent has to make a case for funding to the Dean then in practice s/he has little if any financial autonomy and there is little in the way of distributed leadership.

H of D C1

The H of D C1 respondent reflects that distributed leadership is more rhetoric than reality.

His / her testimony offers a perception of reality based on the respondent's experiences of the post-1992 sector.

Respondent: ' [That is] I think a fairly managerialist sector, so I come back to the top down, the Vice Chancellor and similar senior people's perception of distributed leadership is of command and control.'

Respondent: 'Although there's a lot of discussion about, [distributed leadership] I think there's some degree of rhetoric about autonomy and if you like distributed leadership, I think the reality is much less than the rhetoric would have you believe.'

Professor B1

The respondent reported the story of a new Dean who stated that s/he had no interest in staff that they may dismiss. This indicates indifference to followership and the engagement of the staff.

Respondent: 'With one Dean in particular, a member of staff went in to welcome him/her and said to did [they] know anybody in the area which the [Dean] said no and s/he said well don't worry, we're a sociable bunch, we'll invite you to social do's, summers coming up people have BBQs to which s/he had the reply, I don't socialise with people I may have to fire.'

Other respondents reported this particular example of insensitivity towards colleagues.

Respondent: 'We were amazed but subsequently not amazed when we saw the fact that this [person] was just brought in possibly, we don't know, but possibly brought in to streamline

the department, obviously we were fairly appalled by it but subsequent behaviour underlined it, [s/he] never got to know any of the staff within [the] department, I was relatively senior in there, I don't think [s/he] ever even knew my name.'

The Professor's report that one of the new Deans had stated that s/he does not: '*socialise with people I may have to fire*' demonstrates a power-based managerial style (critical discourse) and a disregard for engaging with staff and or any notions of distributed leadership.

Programme Director A1

The managerial control and non-distribution of leadership reported by Programme Director A1 concurs with respondents in all three case-studies. The respondent's comment regarding: '*So many rules and regulations and paperwork,*' is common to the bureaucratic background of the former polytechnic post-1992 universities.

Respondent: '*Things are more driven now by the Dean and the Senior Management Team in terms of we've got so many rules and regulations and paperwork, whereas our team, under different leadership, it was a bit more fluid and a bit more easy-going.*'

Programme Director A2

The respondent reflects upon the way his / her manager oversees his / her work. The testimony suggests little by way of distributed leadership and more of control as described in functionalism.

Respondent: '*I sometimes feel controlled, which is, how do I say it? It feels like I have to come here [into the office] even though sometimes I wouldn't like to. So from that perspective I feel sometimes a bit stifled.*'

Principle Lecturer A1

Principle Lecturer A1 repeatedly uses the word '*force*' to describe the leader-follower relationship and asserted that a university cannot rely upon the use of force to '*extract quality*'.

Respondent: 'It is difficult because you cannot force people just by force. You cannot force people. You cannot force it to extract quality because the other question is how you extract the best on issues that they cannot be enforced and measured, all teaching, research, they cannot be forced.'

The Principle Lecturer A1 repeatedly explained that it is for leaders to solve problems and guide their followers. This approach does not appear to include consultative and distributed leadership.

Respondent: 'The responsibility of the leader is to show how a difficult situation can be a learning opportunity. To take people through and to make them better.'

Respondent: '[The] vice-chancellor, deans, senior management within the business school, course directors [make the decisions] and each time the message is coming down 'this is decided, just get on with it'.

The decisions are made without consulting the lecturers who deliver the teaching. The respondent's observation regarding decisions '*coming down*' is commonly reported amongst the cases. What is emerging from the research is control via hierarchical leadership structures.

Senior Lecturer B1

Respondent: 'The new Dean in now says that s/he's just banging his/her head against a brick wall it's still always 'No' at the very top [VC and senior executive].'

This respondent's observations support B case-study's current Dean in that s/he has no authority to make decisions about recruitment and the VC and senior executive decide policy and strategy.

Senior Lecturer B2

Senior Lecturer B2 commented that there has not been nor is there distributed leadership in his/her business school.

Respondent: 'It's just a top down form of communication, not upward communication.'

The 'top down' form of communication concurs with the observations of other respondent who have commented of the hierarchical leadership style and the absence of consultations

Senior Lecturer C1

The respondent reported a lack of opportunities for promotion within the Business School.

Respondent: 'I think we have a problem here with promotions.'

This is a similar observation to the Dean in case-study A, who observed that academics are

not usually recognised for promotion within their own institution..

Focus Group of Two Former Programme Leaders from the B Case-study Business School

The power distance reported by the respondents indicates a context which is unlikely to cultivate distributed forms of leadership. Instead, there appears to be a hierarchical bureaucracy.

Participant 2: 'Almost no social interaction at all between managers and troops. So – a big sense of detachment.'

Participant 2: 'In terms of classical management styles of leadership, what we experienced was autocratic.'

Interviewer: 'The word that's often used to describe academia is "collegiality".'

Participant 1: [laughs]

Participant 2: 'My experience was absolutely no sense of collegiality whatsoever.'

Respondents in each of the case-studies have noted the tendency for their business schools not to develop talent from within the business school, but instead hire external candidates.

Participant 1: 'It was a very adversarial environment.'

Participant 1: 'Now since leaving this university I, have worked at lots of other universities, often at the same time, and so what I will say to you is, though we're talking about [B case-study], this does seem to be a trademark – post-1992.'

The respondent's subsequent experiences of working in post-1992 universities are that they

are led in a similar manner to the B case. Accordingly the respondent supports the perspective that there are systemic issues in leadership in the post- 1992 university business schools.

6.4 **Chapter Summary**

The respondents reported here have been candid with their observations and experiences of leadership in their business schools. In reporting their experiences and perceptions of leadership and followership, the respondents have surfaced some interesting dissonances between leadership theories, as discussed in the literature review, and their experiences of leadership in their post-1992 university business schools. The respondents' reported perceptions of leadership and followership are the antithesis of an enquiring collegiate community of scholars. Furthermore, the reported examples of autocratic leadership are neither transformational, nor distributive. Instead the respondents' reported examples of hierarchical leadership and micro-management. The respondents have thereby provided this research with a rich source of information about their perceptions of leadership and followership. The findings indicate a predominantly functionalist environment, with limited indications of distributed leadership and consequential disengagement and disaffection with the leader/ follower engagement.

7 Discussion and Analysis

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this discussion and analysis chapter is to critically evaluate the research findings in relation to the literature review and the themes, which emerged from the primary research and thereby, address the research questions (Cassell and Symon, 2004).

The following discussion refers to the literature review and findings chapters in critically evaluating perceptions of leadership and followership in three post-1992 university business schools.

The primary research has surfaced new insights into what is happening in the in the three case-studied business schools. Accordingly, what the respondents have shared with regard to their perceptions of reality, stories and observations is evaluated to address the research questions and identify what the research has contributed to our knowledge of leadership and followership (Bolden *et al*, 2011; Fuller *et al*, 2013; Gabriel 2000; Mabey, 2013). The analysis of the findings surfaced three themes in relation to the research questions, which are presented in the preceding findings chapter. Accordingly, the first theme analysing transforming leadership in a change context addresses the question: *Within a transforming environment for post-1992 business schools what part, if any, does transformational leadership contribute?* The research surfaced instabilities which were impeding followership, so the emergent theme focused upon the instabilities jeopardising the possibility of followership, in answer to the research question: *What is the role of followers in a post-1992*

business school context? The third emergent theme reflects upon the significant gap between the absence of distributed leadership reported by the respondents and the research question: *‘To explore perceptions of reality or rhetoric of distributed leadership.’*

The findings chapter reflected upon what the respondents in the three case-studied business schools had shared about their leadership and followership experiences. The respondents’ frank and sometimes provocative examples of dysfunctional leadership supplied a rich source of their personal reflections and stories as to what it is like to be a leader, follower or sometimes both, in a post-1992 university business school (Peck and Dickinson, 2009 p. 34). What emerged from the research were therefore the respondents’ perceptions of reality from their experiences of what it means to be a leader or follower in a post-1992 university business school.

Accordingly, this chapter is organised into an analysis and discussion of the three emerging themes. The research discussion in the findings chapter surfaced many candidly expressed testimonies wherein respondents shared critical observations of leadership behaviours and decisions. Respondents also reported that the leadership they were experiencing had impacted negatively upon their community to scholars and students. The presentational strategy here is therefore to view leadership and followership through the prism of the respondents’ stories and observations and to evaluate their perceptions in relation to the literature review chapters (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 934). The critical discussion, which thereby emerges provides

new insights into the leadership of knowledgeable workers within rapidly changing organisational contexts such as the post-1992 university business schools (Bolden *et al*, 2011; Nicholson 2014; Porter and McLaughlin, 2006).

In the methodology chapter, the work of Geertz (1973) was discussed in relation to providing the reader with a '*thick description*' of the organisational context/s within which the research is being conducted. The contextualising benefit of '*thick description*' was first identified by Ryle (1949), whose work later informed the work of Geertz (1973 p. 9) that advocates the inclusion of a '*thick descriptions*' of organisational context/s to thereby provide the reader with the context in which the respondents' are expressing their thoughts and observations (Peck and Dickinson 2009; Porter and McLaughlin, 2006).

Hence, the research thereby illuminates aspects of what Denzin and Lincoln (2000) described as the prism of organisational factors, which influence the respondents' reported experiences. Accordingly, the analysis discussion in this chapter refers back to the thick descriptions of the respondents' perceptions of reality, which were presented in the findings chapter (Mabey, 2013). The emerging analysis of those findings in relation to the literature review is viewed here within the context of the findings and what this means for leadership, followership and distributed leadership within the three studied business schools (Peck and Dickinson, 2009; Ponterotto, 2006).

Upon reflecting on the transcripts whilst preparing the findings chapter, it became apparent that there are some common contextual factors across all three case-studies (Johnson and Duberley 2003; Geertz 1973). In each case the respondents reported that restructuring had been imposed with little by way of meaningful consultation. This was particularly so in what respondents reported in the B and W cases. The respondents also reported a consequential sense of insecurity and instabilities which had impacted upon their leadership and followership relationships. Concurrent with the reported transforming work environment, the respondents also reported an absence of senior leadership with transformational characteristics to engage followership (Bass and Riggio, 2008; Collinson, 2006; Koen and Bitzer, 2010). Consequently, the following discussion of the themes thereby reflects upon the communalities and differences between what respondents have shared in the three business schools.

7.2 Transforming Leadership in a Change Context

The post-1992 University business schools studied have experienced transforming changes which include a rapid expansion of student participation during the late 1990s, followed by retrenchments as an economic downturn in Britain reduced student numbers at a time when the fees were being increased across the higher education sector (Hefce Report 2014; Morgan and Newman, 2010). The primary research concurred with the literature that there are both transforming external and internal contextual forces working in higher education (Arthur and Piatt, 2010; Barnett 2009). However, the research indicated that those changes were more

rapid and unsettling to academics in business schools studied than generally reported in the literature.

The research indicated that there were similarities within and between cases. For example, one of the most experienced Deans interviewed asserted that almost all business school Deans are faced with a radically changing context and environment. The Dean went even further to observe that the radical changes went beyond the Post 1992 universities and are impacting upon all of the other HEI sectors whether private, post-'92, or pre-'92.

The respondent's observations support the proposition that the transformative changes and consequential organisational instabilities indicated a significant dilemma for both leadership and followership regarding how people might respond to a context of continuing instability (Collinson, 2014).

According to Grint (2008a, p16) in such circumstances the unknown nature of the transformational changes are better addressed as a '*wicked situation*' in his model, which recommends a consultative approach to leadership in unknown situations. However, the respondents in this study were reporting that the predominant approaches they were experiencing were a combination of bureaucracy and hierarchical control (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003).

The model by Grint (2008a, p16) that was discussed in the literature review (Figure 3) provides a framework for reflecting upon three differing typologies of problems, power and

authority in organisations. Grint (2008a) has constructed a set of descriptions of those three distinct types of situations in an organisation and the different approaches which could be adopted to address them. Hence, for a '*Wicked*' situation, the approach is to, '*ask questions*', for '*Tame*' situation it is to '*organise a process*' and for '*Critical*' to '*provide answers*' (p16).

This thesis is interested in reflecting upon whether there are similarities in how respondents perceived their business school leadership, with regards to the interventions they introduce in response to the changing HE environment (Brookes and Grint 2010; Grint, 2014). It is therefore helpful to reflect upon the respondents' perceptions of leadership decision making in their environments. For example, some of the respondents reported a tendency for senior managers to adopt interventions which, when viewed through Grint's (2008a,p16) descriptors, are a '*Tame*' or '*Critical*' response to addressing organisational situations. However, the situations which the respondents' described, such as the retention or redundancy of academics, the replacement of Deans and other senior post holders, how work is distributed, or what is taught in programmes and how people deliver teaching, sit more comfortably within what Grint's model (2008a p16) 'identified as *Wicked*' problem.

Furthermore, the respondents' reported perceptions of leadership surfaced an apparent tendency for people, albeit unconsciously, to misinterpret the typology of a problem where it might be '*Wicked*' by responding to it with a combination of interventions which sit in the '*Tame*' to '*organise a process*' or '*Critical*' to '*provide answers*' (2008a p16). This is interesting to the research, because, as discussed in the introductory chapter, the literature has

observed that many of the post 1992 universities have retained a tendency to address situations with bureaucratic procedures. Whilst this would not, of course, be the case for all, according to many of the respondents, what they observe maybe interpreted as ‘*Tame*’ or ‘*Critical*’ problem solutions in their situations whilst what the respondents’ articulate as the issues appear to be complex ‘*Wicked*’ situations. Consequently, a predisposition for ‘*Tame*’ or ‘*Critical*’ problem solutions may have become part of the contextual behaviour (Geertz 1973). Yet, ‘*Tame*’ or ‘*Critical*’ interventions, which are suitable when applied to the appropriate situations, may however be insufficiently adaptive and consultative to meet ‘*wicked*’ challenges (Grint 2008a, p16; Clarke and Butcher 2009).

Complex problems tend to have interpersonal and organisational political dimensions, which are likely to be exacerbated by being ignored by the use of ‘*Tame*’ or ‘*Critical*’ interventions. For example, some of the respondents in each of the three cases complained that they were not included in the decision-making processes. Additionally, some to the respondents’ perception of the changes was that they were being implemented for the benefit of the careers of those initiated them, rather than for the greater well being of their community (Bolden *et al* 2014). The research also surfaced underlying, unresolved tensions as reported by respondents, in each of the three cases (Hogan and Hogan 2002). This concurs with Grint’s (2010, p9) observations that:

‘Wicked Problems are inherently political in nature not scientific or ‘rational’ and progress is likely to be via a negotiation. For this [we] need to acquire Aristotle’s phronesis – the Wisdom to acknowledge that the situation is not like any other, combined with the experience to recognize that such Wicked Problems require a qualitatively different approach from Tame or Critical Problems.’

By viewing what the respondents have shared through Grint's framework, (2008a) the findings indicate some similarities in the leadership approaches described which are being applied by people in management roles across the three cases. Indeed, some of the Deans interviewed, such as the two most recent incumbents with the C case, reported a preference for making decisions themselves or just including senior management colleagues in their discussions. Hence, whilst Grint's model (2008a) postulates that different problems, whether '*Wicked*', '*Tame*' or '*Critical*' require different approaches, the respondents indicated that senior managers are inclined towards responding to situations as '*tame*' or '*critical*' rather than adopting a consultative approach which according to Grint (2008a) is more likely to be appropriate in a complex organisation, such as a university where rapid transforming changes are occurring (Bargh *et al*, 2000; Koen and Bitzer, 2010).

The research findings thereby support the perspective that the relationship between leadership and followership, which can often interchange in university context, is central to addressing issues in complex knowledge worker environments, such as the three cases studied. Moreover, the respondents' observations on leadership and followership support the consideration of a re-evaluation as to how leadership and followership can serve the community (Bolden *et al* 2014; Fuller *et al* 2013; Graen *et al* 1991; Greenleaf *et al* 2003; Grint, 2008; Mabey *et al* 2012; Macfarlane, 2014; Rayner, *et al* 2010).

The research surfaced a challenging paradox for the business schools studied. Whilst the respondents commonly reported their recognition that the business schools are experiencing

rapid changes, they also observed that their post-1992 universities had retained a propensity for bureaucracy, with its inherent hierarchical management structures. This bureaucratic managerial approach to organisation concurs with the work of Pratt (1997) who commented that the post-1992 universities retained the bureaucratic structures, which they had inherited from their Polytechnic origins. Furthermore, the respondents also observed the resilience of those bureaucratic tendencies, which have been continued into the first quarter of the twenty-first century and thereby means that the organisations are not as adaptive to new approaches to managing talent and collaborative leadership (Chreim, 2014; Commission on the future of management and leadership, 2014). For example, the longest serving Dean in the A case reflected that talented academics often felt discouraged from seeking management appointments. S/he ascribed the reason why people were uninterested in management post to the excessive bureaucracy. A certain amount of processes and procedures are, of course, part of any HEI operation. However, the Dean criticised the post-'92 institutions for their tendency to be more process driven, more bureaucratic than other parts of the HEI sector and consequently discouraging people from taking up management positions. Consequently the adherence to structures and procedures, appear to be impeding the development of a leadership approach, which is more suitable to the current transforming environment (Bolden *et al* 2014; Commission on the future of management and leadership 2014; Fuller *et al* 2013; Grint, 2014; Mabey, *et al* 2012; Macfarlane, 2014).

7.2.1 Perceptions of Reality: Riding a Tiger Backwards

The research was supported by the framework in Figure 4 which was adapted from Mabey, and Finch-Lees' (2008) framework descriptions of discourses. This research indicated that in a complex knowledge based environment there was likely to be no single predominant objective reality of leadership or followership. Hence the research focus is from a constructivist perspective. The notes below are the Constructivist Discourse

Descriptions taken from Figure 4.

From Figure 4: Frame of Discourse in Business Schools

Constructivist Discourse

No single predominant objective reality of leader or follower within a business school

Elements of collective sense making

Individuals form interpretations of leaders or followers in their business school context

Respondents' interpretations of their leadership context

The respondents in all the three case-studies shared a communality of perceptions regarding their senior university leadership. For example, respondents reported frequent changes such as restructuring, including changes of Deans and management teams, redundancies and reorganizations, with little or no meaningful consultation with academic staff (Koen and Bitzer, 2010; Kok *et al*, 2010). It is worth noting here that the terms change and transformation are linguistically value neutral; that is to say that such interventions may transpire to be or may be perceived as organisationally beneficial, neutral or negative. This does, of course, depend upon the perceptions of the respondents describing those events

(Mordechai, 2009; Thorpe, 2008). What is interesting is that respondents in different case studies who had no knowledge of each other, were reporting similar perceptions of the changes they were experiencing. For example, Dean C3 Previous reported that s/he had repeatedly experienced hierarchical leadership whereby decisions and directions were formulated above his/her level as the business school Dean (Kok *et al*, 2010). Furthermore, the researched group of Senior Lecturers across the three case-studies (Senior Lecturer A1; Senior Lecturer B1; Senior Lecturer B2; Senior Lecturer C1) all reported a common sense that there have been negative outcomes as a result of multiple and continuous policy changes, academic staff redundancies and the frequent changes of Deans and department managers. These changes were commonly reported in case-studies C and B and to a lesser extent A. Accordingly, the overall sense of reality reported by the respondents across the three case-studies was one of continuous changes, restructuring and redundancies or the threat of potential redundancy (in the B case-study, several iterations of redundancies). Furthermore, respondents' commonly cited experiencing leadership which micro managed and controlled decision-making (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003). This approach to the leadership of academics was reported to have impacted negatively on academic collegiality, morale and the student learning experience. The reported lack of community and common citizenship may be contributing to the complex problems described by the respondents (Bolden *et al* 2014; Bolden *et al* 2008b; Grint 2008a).

The B case had twelve Deans in ten years and generally the short tenure of Deans in the case-studies, means that new incumbents have little time to present and implement

transformational changes. The consequential insecurity of employment for Deans and managers in the case-studies was also reported as contributing to self-serving behaviours that enhance individuals' future employability. Hence, new Deans may be minded of the need to have something new to enhance their CVs to offer the next prospective employer; for example, the restructuring of departments, management committees and taught programmes. Respondents in each case-study criticised such actions as failing to serve the best interests of their business schools' community.

Transforming strategies does not, necessarily, indicate that leaders are in possession of the characteristics associated in the literature with transformational leadership (Bass and Riggio, 2008). Indeed the followership, which the literature cites as a necessary accompaniment to facilitate transformational leadership (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Bolden *et al*, 2011; Goffee and Jones, 2001), is mostly absent in the case-studies transcripts. Accordingly, there was also an absence of reported leader behaviours that build follower engagement (Bass and Avolio, 1990a; Bennis and O' Toole, 2005; Bush 2010). Instead, there was a communality of perception across the three cases that the senior university leadership tended to be remote and detached from their academic colleagues. To illustrate his / her perception of leader remoteness, one Dean told a story of having his / her photograph taken by a business school lecturer because s/he had never met any of the previous Deans, of which there had been a number.

Dean B Present: 'S/he [a lecturer] actually took a photograph of me to prove that s/he'd seen the Dean of the business school. And I thought that was absolutely shocking, absolutely

shocking, so I make a point of walking around the building. It's staggering isn't it?

The respondents at all levels in the three business schools identified the use of hierarchical power to change the business schools' structure and staffing profiles. The reported rates of reorganisation were more pronounced than indicated in the literature. For example, the research into higher education by Bolden *et al*, (2008a, p. 373) observed that leadership in complex organisations such as universities would contain " 'emergent and shifting processes of social influence,' The shifts in patterns of influence were in evidence, but with more rapid and recurrent implementations of transforming restructuring of staff posts and redundancies than reported in the literature. The respondents' also criticised the regular staff restructuring which had produced adverse consequences upon their sense of employment security, peer esteem and trust within the business school (Collinson, 2007; O'Neill, 2002). The contextual challenges emerging from those rapid and transformative changes were evaluated by the most experienced Dean interviewed in the case-studies, who commented that:

Dean C Previous: 'I lived it, I had every single developmental challenge, the boss from hell, the turnaround situation in impossible contexts, undermining colleagues, difficulty in getting respect'

S/he then used the following metaphors to describe life in a post-1992 university business school:

Dean C Previous: 'And I always describe [the name of a university has been deleted] as like riding a tiger backwards, it's very fierce, it goes very fast, you don't know where it's going and you can't get off and I felt that's just the university'.

The Dean's perception of reality presents an image of an organisation wherein s/he reports an absence of any sense of personal influence within a context of constant, unpredictable and fierce challenges and directional changes (Morgan, 1997). The words '*tiger*', '*very fierce*' '*goes very fast*' and '*can't get off*' also communicated the sense of organisational forces upon which the Dean has no control or influence. Interestingly, a programme leader from a different university shared a similar sentiment conveyed by the following metaphor:

Former Programme Leader in the B case-study from the focus group: '[Working in the business school was]... *just like being in a washing machine the whole time, never knowing when anyone was going to open the door.*'

The two respondents' from different cases offer similar perceptions of reality regarding an unsettling sense that they have no control over what is happening within an environment where others exert power over their academic careers without consultation (Mordechai, 2009; Morgan, 1997; Thorpe, 2008). Consequently, the research surfaced a considerable gap between theory and practice, that is to say, dissonances between the felt experiences of academics in the case-studied universities who are reporting the impacts of transformational changes, in contrast to the transformational leadership theory which encourages leader / followership engagement and inclusion (Brookes, 2007; English, 2002).

The respondents across the three cases reported similar instances of senior university managers that were implementing transformational changes without demonstrating the charismatic leadership which transformational theory identifies as necessary to engage

followers and thereby successfully embed transforming change into an organisation (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2001; Bass and Avolio, 1990b; Bass and Riggio, 2008). Moreover, the respondents reported that senior managers did not consult with their colleagues but instead imposed structural changes and micro-managed appointments to academic posts (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). The reported lack of consultations by those in senior university leadership posts indicates leader behaviours which concurs with the research by Nicholson (2014, p. 29) who observed that:

'Poor leadership was closely related to lack of emotional and social intelligence including resistance to distributing leadership and authority across the system.'

The A case-study was selected because the Dean had been in post for a number of years, which is in marked contrast to the B and W cases where there had been numerous incumbents in recent years. The A case-study levels of restructuring and transforming change were less acute than in the B and W case-studies. Interestingly the Dean A Present confirmed the observation of academics in the other cases, that, some career-orientated managers, may use transformational changes for personal career advancement, without regard to the consequential damage that such restructuring changes might have upon their business Schools.

Dean A Present criticised the abuse of power to implement what s/he described as: *'slash and burn'* policies by self-serving leaders. This evidence goes beyond the research reported in the literature review by Peck and Dickinson (2009, p. 60) who had observed some indications of, *'hierarchical / individualist'* leadership in universities. Indeed, the behaviours reported by Dean A Present are very different from the servant leader which Greenleaf *et al*, (2003,

p.163) identified as necessary in a university context: *'Universities need more servant leaders to bring about that change through benign non-coercive means.'*

Instead, many of the respondents identified leadership initiating policies which were bringing about change through coercive means and thereby destabilising their business school's ability to deliver teaching or research. Within the bureaucratic hierarchies described by the respondents, they have limited access to and control of resources and power, as identified by Bolden *et al*, (2008a). When combined with the high turnover of Deans and managers, the respondents' observations indicate insecurities and pressures to deliver short-term changes, instead building collegiality and longer-term stability.

A perception of the exercise of power by a few senior staff was commonly reported in each of the case-studies (Dickinson, 2009). For example, Dean W Previous illustrated the use of power with a metaphorical comparison to mafia enforcers. This indicates that s/he has a very limited sense of autonomy or self-determination in the position of Dean under what s/he perceives to be a coercive and powerful leadership. Interestingly, the other Deans and senior business school managers from the three cases indicated that they had little by way of autonomy to make key decisions for their business schools.

7.2.2 Transformational Leadership: Practice and Theory

The literature emphasises the importance of employee engagement and respect for leadership where an organisation is proceeding through transformational changes (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2001; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Bass and Avolio, 1990b; Bass and Riggio, 2008; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Bass, 1998; Bass, 1999; Boerner *et al*, 2007; Podsakoff *et al*, 1996; Turnbull and Edwards, 2005; Vecchio *et al*, 2008). However, the research surfaced major dissonances between the respondents' awareness of the personal behaviours which accompany transformational leadership, with their own contextual experiences of leader behaviours in practice. For example, Dean C Previous, who compared the senior university management to the '*Mafia*', has also published journal articles in the area of leadership. This would indicate a considerable divergence between what the respondent knows about leadership theory and his / her perceptions of leadership in a Business School context. Other respondents in each of the case-studies also reported significant theory and practice gaps; that is to say, the respondents were experiencing major dissonances between what they theoretically understand to be efficacious within transformational leadership theory and their experiences of leadership in context (Brookes, 2007; English, 2002). For example, one of the focus group participants asserted that his / her role was to follow without questioning the university management's directives. S/he described a context in which his / her perception was that people were not supposed to question or ask why a task was required or even contribute an alternative opinion. Accordingly, s/he stated that leadership did not exist in that university. One of the terms s/he used to describe the experience of working in a business school was that s/he was required to follow a handbook. The respondent's choice of the word

handbook provides an insight into his / her perception of reality whereby academics have no input or influence on the way work is conducted within a hierarchical bureaucracy (Grint, 2005a; Nicholson, 2014). Whilst the respondent's perception was that leadership did not exist, it would be more accurate to postulate that the kind of leadership which was controlling that university was not of a style that s/he respected or would therefore wish to follow. This is problematic for his / her university's leadership because they are not being followed or supported by their academic community. Instead, the respondent is articulating disengaged acquiescence to the leadership's rules and regulations.

In the C case the H of D C wryly critiqued the irony of business schools that do not practise what they teach. S/he continued to criticise the senior university leadership for being out of touch with contemporary thinking on managing organisations, in particular their lack of appropriate qualifications for the post, such as the MA or MBA which are taught in business schools to people aspiring to become leaders in other sectors. Similarly Dean B1 Current reported a level of leadership instability, which would negate the construction of meaningful leader / follower engagement. For example s/he observed that during one decade the business school had appointed twelve different deans. According to the respondent this demonstrated an extraordinary level of incompetence by the senior university management.

The respondent's assertions regarding senior leadership incompetence are corroborated by the other academics that were interviewed for the B case. Here again, respondents criticised the application of inappropriate criteria to select the appointees, which thereby made the

failures probably inevitable. This criticism of selection criteria was also reported in the W case. For example, the H of D C case asked the rhetorical question of how a PhD in a non-business subject area could qualify a person to run a multi-million pound business. It is, of course, quite possible for a person who has the appropriate attitudes, knowledge and skills, and or the motivation to learn, to take up a post and build their competences. However, the leader characteristics reported by the respondents in the three cases indicate a core of leaders who have more confidence in their own abilities to lead than the competence to do so (Nieto 2014). Indeed the repeated selection of people who are subsequently dismissed supports the respondents' criticisms of their leaders and the failures in selection procedures.

The research has indicated that the popular transformational leadership belief – one might almost use the word faith – that a new leader can transform a university, was not the reported experience of the respondents in the B and C or A cases. However, with respect to the tenets of transformational leadership, neither did the respondents report having leaders who demonstrated transformational characteristics. The core characteristics of transformational leadership, as articulated by Bass and Riggio (2008, p. 15), are contained in the principle of the 'Four "I's" which are: *'Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, Individual consideration.'* Accordingly, if the C and B case universities were trying to appoint leaders with transformation behaviours, according to the respondents in this research, they had repeatedly failed. Conversely, the respondents did report experiencing hierarchical bureaucracy, career self-serving leaders and managerial incompetence in the

organisation of people and resources (Clarke and Butcher 2009; Nicholson, 2014).

The personal behaviour of some of the senior leaders was reported as lacking interpersonal empathy or emotional intelligence. According to the work of Hogan and Hogan, (2002, pp. 91-100), leadership failures are often precipitated because the appointed leader is unable to understand other people's perspectives. This research thereby surfaces a wider theory / practice gap than indicated in the literature, extending beyond the indications of low collegiate consultation reported in the research by Bolden *et al*, (2009).

One of the interview questions employed in this research was derived from the work of Erickson (2010) who recommended that educational leaders ought to be asking questions inside their institutions such as: *'What is it like to be a.....?'*

The respondents were thereby encouraged to reflect upon their university environment and share their perceptions of what it means to be a leader or follower within their business school context (Erickson, 2010). This research indicated that respondents had organisational self-awareness and could therefore have provided a contribution to the formulation of policies, if the senior managers were minded to consult and include colleagues in the decision-making processes. For example, Dean B 1 Current reported that one of the outcomes of his / her study into staff attitudes was that the lecturers in the business school reported comments such as: *'working here for the past few years has been like working in a war zone'*.

Whereupon another academic replied:

'I've only registered for PhD because I'd get sacked if I didn't.'

Dean B1 Current thereby used his / her internal research study to inform new proposals, which might begin to address the previous organisational outcomes of restructuring, redundancies and the replacement of academic managers with external appointees, which had precipitated the low staff morale and student dissatisfaction in the B case business school. Accordingly, Dean B1 Current's behaviour indicated some aspects of the principle of the 'Four "I"s' of transformational leadership (Bass and Riggio, 2008, p. 15).

It is worth noting that Dean B Current was the outlying leader example in the case-studies where respondents in the B case-study reported that s/he had some characteristics of transformational leadership (Bass and Riggio, 2008; Vecchio *et al*, 2008). This Dean was reported to have begun engaging in a discourse with his / her colleagues to form an agreed participative approach to the leadership and organisation of their business school. The Dean's sense of the valuing of colleagues shares some similarities with Plato's proposition that an educational environment ought to inform behaviour and be of service to the community by '*treating themselves and their wards in a civilized fashion*' (Waterfield, 1993, p. 121). The context in which this was occurring was within the B case-study, which had been subjected to more restructuring, reorganizing and redundancies than the other cases reported in this research (Johnson and Duberley, 2003; Geertz, 1973). Consequently, Dean B Current's initiatives to meet academic colleagues and listen to their observations and suggestions of how to begin rebuilding morale sits within a business school context where the loss of trust and disengagement of academics would probably require a significant period of time to recover from the destabilising policies of the previous decades. However, the research into

case B suggests that a long period of stability was not the norm. Dean B Current succinctly identified the instability in one brief statistic: '*twelve Deans in ten years*'. There was also a high level of staff turnover reported by other B case-study respondents, which they attributed to the lack of internal promotions and several rounds of restructuring and redundancies. All of these interventions are contrary knowledge we have from the published research over recent decades on management and leadership development, which informs our understanding of how organisations work (Bolden *et al*, 2011; Bush, 2010; Handy, 1985; Henkel, 2005; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

7.3 Instability Jeopardising the Possibility of Followership

7.3.1 Leadership Instability

The research indicated that changes in the case-studied business schools were more rapid and disruptive than indicated in the literature (Bennis and Toole 2005; Bolden *et al*, 2011).

For example, the contextual changes observed by Dean W3 Previous indicate that the challenges the universities are experiencing sit within what Grint (2008a, p. 16) identified as a complex leadership problem in his '*typology of problems, power and authority*.' The typologies offer a progression of situations whereby the first was identified as a '*critical situation*,' which can be addressed by directive leadership, such as an emergency, which calls for immediate management action. The second typology was described as a '*tame*' situation, which sits within the bureaucratic comfort zone of the post-1992 universities, because such situations allow time for the managerial application of processes and procedures to be

produced and implemented. However, the situations described by the Dean W Previous appear to sit within what Grint's typologies described as '*wicked*' problems, whereby there is much less certainty about what the solution/s might be (2008a, p. 16). The recommendation in Grint's (2008a p16) typology model was that such uncertain situations should be responded to with more staff consultation because of an '*increasing requirement for collaborative resolution.*' However, this research indicated that the senior management in all three cases are deploying leadership interventions, which would be more appropriate to the first two examples of Grint's (2008) typology model. In contrast, Grint's (2008a) typology model recommends a collaborative distributed leader approach to garner staff engagement and thereby develop consensual, situation-specific resolutions. The literature indicated that a leadership approach which engages with colleagues and thereby encourages followership is more likely to be appropriate in educational contexts (Anderson *et al*, 2005; Bolden *et al*, 2008a; Bolden *et al*, 2008b; Bush, 2010; Collinson, 2014; Erickson, 2010; Gronn, 2009, Randall and Coakley, 2007).

The newly appointed Dean C Present and Dean B Present articulated diametrically different approaches to leadership and decision-making. For example, Dean C Present's approach to leadership was individualistic, impromptu and non-collaborative. The newly appointed Dean offered the following on how s/he approaches forming the direction of change.

Interviewer: '*From a leadership perspective how do you make the decisions about direction and the change?*'

Respondent: '*I'm making it up as I go along is the honest answer.*'

The perspective of leadership articulated by the respondent above contrasts markedly with Dean B1 Current whose approach was research based and consultative.

Dean B1 Current: 'I'd like to think that my style is a reasonable consultative one, I need to work through persuasion, through consultation, through engagement with people and what I try to do with my staff is to encourage them to accept responsibility.'

The contrast between the leadership approaches of these two Deans is interesting when reviewed in relation to Grint's typologies of problems (Grint, 2008a, p16). Dean B1 Present's approach, which was informed by the outcomes of his / her qualitative study with colleagues, identified that the instability in the B case is jeopardising followership. Accordingly s/he is addressing the contextual issues in the appropriate manner since in Grint's typologies this would be defined as a 'wicked' problem (Grint 2008a, p16). In contrast, Dean C Present's approach indicates that directive emergency leadership could address the situation in the W case as a 'critical situation'. In essence, there is a difference in each Dean's perception of reality and consequently two diverse leadership approaches (Thorpe, 2008).

Whilst reflecting upon the findings of the research, the overall sense reported by the full set of respondents is that the B and C cases sit in the complex 'wicked' problems area (Grint, 2008, p.16) wherein there is much less certainty about what the solution/s might be. Accordingly, a wider consultative approach is likely to be more efficacious than an immediate directed leader change initiative. Furthermore, both the C and B cases have already had several changes of Deans in recent years. Respondents from both the C and B case-studies have indicated that those leader led changes contributed to their present

difficulties in staff morale and declining student satisfaction levels. For example, the respondents from the B case-study reported experiencing several iterations of redundancies and replacement lecturers, senior lecturers, programme directors, heads of departments, professors and Deans. Hence, the structural changes initiated by those in leadership have precipitated a '*wicked situation*' (Grint, 2014; Grint, 2008a). Accordingly, respondents shared their sense of insecurity, uncertainty, disaffection, disengagement and demoralisation with this researcher.

It was evident from the respondents in both the B and C case-studies that their perception was that the replacement of academics indicated that the senior management were unclear of what they expected new incumbents to achieve for them. Moreover the insecurities emanating from the numerous leader changes, combined with several rounds of redundancies, had reduced respondents' sense of followership (Bush 2010; Collinson, 2007; Lichtenstein *et al*, 2007).

The research therefore indicated that despite few internal problems, the instabilities caused by reorganisations and redundancies has jeopardised followership, particularly in the C and B cases. For example, Senior Lecturer B2 observed that during the last decade the business school had gone through three rounds of redundancies. Consequently, they have a high turnover of staff. The new appointees were told that they were joining a research led university, which would become like the Russell Group, so they would be focusing on doing research. However when the new lecturers have taken up their posts they have discovered

that it is mainly a teaching university, so they leave after a year. The respondent's observations indicate his / her sense that the leadership is disingenuous both in its attitude towards existing academics, and in the enticements offered to potential new employees. This represents the antithesis of a trusting and collaborative leader / follower relationship and further underlines the extent to which the implementation of a series of reorganisations has jeopardised followership in the B case-study.

Interestingly, whilst the respondents in all of the three cases concur with the literature about the benefits of involving colleagues and the value of distributed leadership, the reported behaviours of the senior university management do not match either the respondents' leadership expectations as followers, or the research-based literature on leadership (Bass and Riggio, 2008; Bolden *et al*, 2011; Brookes, 2007; Collinson, 2007; Erickson, 2010; Grint, 2005a; Gronn, 2009b; Mabey, 2013; Peck and Dickinson, 2009; Spillane *et al*, 2004). For example, the repeated appointments, the dismissals of Deans and other managers indicate major failures of leadership at Dean level and above in the case-studied universities.

For example, Programme Director A1 commented on the lack of distributed leadership: *'Colleagues are actually quite surprised if they're brought into a decision making process'*.

Similarly, when reflecting upon the interpersonal skills of a Dean (one of the previous eleven incumbents), the H of Exec Education B1 reported that the hierarchical managerial style of leadership produced organisational instability and emotional distress for academic

colleagues. S/he comprehensively criticised the lack of concern for the well-being or the sensibilities of colleagues in the business school. The reported absence of interpersonal skills or care in the Dean's behaviour is not an isolated incident and there are reported examples of similar behaviours in the C and A cases as well (Hogan and Hogan, 2002).

The leadership's behaviours therefore raise questions about the criteria used to select people into senior academic management posts. For example, the selection processes in their universities were criticised by Dean C present and Dean B Present, both of whom observed that research capabilities were overly emphasised in recruitment to non-research specific posts such as Deans, departmental managers and lecturers, where the posts were predominantly about the management of people, resources or teaching.

In reviewing the findings regarding surface patterns which were not single-issue-specific, the underlying sense of the respondents' observations was that they do not believe they are experiencing the kind of leadership they would expect in the context of a university business school. It is also commonly reported in all of the three business schools that each university has a small group of senior managers who direct events, monopolise the decision-making and control all the resources. For example, senior staff at the university level outside the business school are reportedly orchestrating the recurrent rounds of redundancies, the frequent restructurings and the hiring and dismissing of numerous academic staff at all levels. Senior Lecturer C1 reported that the business school had had three Deans in recent years. This concurs with the other respondents, who reported experiencing instabilities which are

jeopardising followership. For example, Senior Lecturer B1 summarised the ‘*wicked situation*’ (Grint, 2014; Grint, 2008a) thus:

Senior Lecturer B1: ‘People are pretty worn out and fed up with it all. Deans haven’t stayed long, then they go and everything’s up and chaotic and then quite often in the past they’ve [Deans] been invisible. A mixed bag [Deans and management] [laughs] we’ve had some very autocratic leaders.’

7.3.2 Leadership jeopardising Followership

The respondents across the three cases criticised the autocratic style of leadership they were being subjected to. This degraded their respect and willingness to engage with their universities and work as engaged followers. This contradicts the body of work by Collinson on followership (Collinson, 2014; Collinson, 2007; Collinson, 2006; Collinson and Collinson, 2006). Consequently, the senior leadership are reportedly the major contributors to the complex problems in the cases studied. For example, in referring to the lack of consultation, Senior Lecturer B2 commented that Deans like to stamp their authority on the business school and do not consult or listen to their academic team. This concurs with other respondents who observed that the insecurity of tenure for Deans means that they may feel the need to demonstrate activities which they can report on their CVs when they need to move to the next post. The autocratic use of power is clearly dissonant with the respondents’ perception of what leaderships should be and contrary to the approaches advocated by the leadership literature (Bass and Riggio, 2008; Bolden *et al*, 2011; Brookes, 2007; Collinson,

2007; Erickson, 2010; Grint, 2005; Gronn, 2009a; Peck and Dickinson, 2009; Spillane *et al*, 2004).

Conversely, it is possible that in some cases the Deans were in a state of false consciousness as described in the critical discourse (Mabey, 2013). Hence, they thought that their actions were addressing issues as part of a solution; instead the respondents' perceptions are that the numerous restructurings were the major contributors to the problems. The published literature supports the perspective that organisations benefit from management and leadership development, which is difficult to build upon when people are being constantly reorganised and / or replaced (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

It is also evident that the low job insecurity of Deans in the cases is such that they themselves are the victims of the continuing reorganisations. As such, the Deans reported in the cases studied are operating more at the level of operationalising strategies which are formed elsewhere. For, if the numerous Deans reported on in the C and B case-studies were the authors of the reorganisations they may have been inclined to write themselves into the plan for continued employment. It may therefore be that those respondents who commented that leadership does not happen in their business schools are actually observing repeated patterns of failure by successive Deans who are in reality implementing directives from the Vice Chancellor's office. Furthermore, when the reorganisations, which the Deans did not necessarily construct, fail, the authors of the changes dismissed the Dean. In the B case this happened twelve times, which indicates an interesting perception of reality and probably false

consciousness by senior managers as to what a Dean can achieve with constant reorganisations and the consequences to staff engagement by such interventions.

According to respondent PAR1, there is an absence of leadership in higher education. The perception s/he reported was that: *'I doubt leadership actually exists – I've got to be very honest – completely in higher education.'* The respondent's perception is that the hierarchy on which s/he has no influence controls his / her environment and that this was not his / her sense of what leadership should be. Dean C Previous shared a similar perception when s/he described the Pro Vice Chancellors in his / her university, as *'enforcers'*. The respondent's use of the word *'enforcer'* conveys that s/he felt subjected to a coercive level of control and hierarchical decision-making. Respondent PAR2's (a former programme director) reflection was that leaders were self-directed and ignored current research: *'... [Management are pursuing] their own ambition, sometimes in the face of existing research.'* The respondents reported autocratic non-consultative leadership, which concurs with a leader style defined by Peck and Dickinson as *'hierarchical / individualist'* leadership (2009, p. 60). Accordingly, whilst respondent PAR1's perception of reality (constructivism) is that leadership does not exist in HEIs, the majority of respondents are reporting hierarchical leadership (Grint, 2008a). As such, there is leadership, but not in a manner with which the respondents can engage as followers or participants. The research has thereby surfaced major dissonances between respondents' perceptions of appropriate leadership and their reported experiences of managerial behaviour (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). Accordingly, respondents are reporting from contexts, which are permeated by distrust in the case-studied business schools, from

both leader and follower perspectives of reality.

The disengagement of followers and the reported absence of leadership engagement with the needs of other stakeholders indicate a dysfunctional ‘*wicked*’ situation (Grint, 2014; Grint, 2008a). For example, Dean A Current observed that students’ interests and learning experiences were not recognised as central to business schools until the decline in student numbers during the economic downturn. The metaphor, which s/he utilised, was to compare post-1992 business schools to a low cost airline. Accordingly s/he asserted that it was perceived to be irrelevant how badly the customers were treated because there was always a supply of new customers. This indicates a cynical disinterest in the wellbeing of students or their learning experiences. The comment is of relevance to this research in so far as it surfaces an aspect of senior leader behaviour in a post-1992 university business school context. Indeed, the disengagement reported by the respondents is likely to have impacted upon the learning environment for students too. Consequently the research has surfaced new insights into leader / follower disengagement in the case-studied business schools and the impact it has on these institutions as learning and teaching environments.

7.4 **Non-distribution of Leadership**

The literature review identified considerable research interest in the application of distributed leadership in educational environments (Bolden *et al*, 2009; Bolden *et al*, 2008a; Bolden *et al*, 2008b; Gronn, 2009b; Nicholson, 2014; Macfarlane, 2011; Rayner *et al* 2010; Spillane *et al*, 2004). Part of this research therefore studied whether distributed leadership

was part of the sensed reality of the respondents in the post-1992 universities' business schools studied. In conducting the interviews and then constructing the previous findings chapter, it became apparent that there were similarities in what the respondents shared regarding distributed leadership in the case-studied business schools. Indeed, the respondents indicated inherent contradictions between the aspirations for distributed, consultative leadership and the bureaucratic controls and use of power, which they reported experiencing. As such, the research concurs with the literature in reporting contextual barriers in the organisational structures of post-1992 business schools towards empowering academic and distributing leadership (Koen and Bitzer 2010; Lumby, 2013; Spillane, 2006).

The respondents provided valuable testimonies offering the research valuable constructive dissent, which Watson (2007) has argued is needed in higher education, albeit in confidence to a researcher, regarding their experiences of bureaucratic and hierarchical leadership in their business schools. The respondents indicated that distributed leadership was mostly rhetorical and not evidenced in their experiences of practical leadership in their business schools. Accordingly, this study provides some new insights into leadership in a post-1992 university context. For example, a paper by Bolden *et al*, (2008a, p.360) had indicated that:

'One of the most influential [leadership] models to be embraced within the UK education sector is 'distributed leadership', which now heavily informs the thinking of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership for the post-compulsory education sector and the LFHE in the higher education sector.'

However, the reported observations of the respondents in this research indicated that instead of distributed leadership, senior managers in their universities are employing hierarchical

managerial command and control. For example, the H of D C1 reported that in his/her experience, the post-1992s are:

H of D C1: 'A fairly managerialist sector, the Vice Chancellor and similar senior people's perception of distributed leadership is of command and control.'

This accords with Gronn's work (2006) that questioned whether academic distributed leadership might be unattainable in practice. The research findings support the work of Bolden *et al* (2008a) and Gronn (2006) in surfacing leadership behaviours which sometimes are reported to negate the distribution of leadership. The research also surfaced similarities in the leadership practices, as perceived by many of the respondents in different cases studies. The reported perceptions were that respondents sensed there was limited rhetorical lip-service to consultation, beyond the formal consultation processes required by law for redundancies, reorganisation and the redeployment of academics. The research thereby indicates a gap between distributed leader behaviour in theory and the practices indicated by many of the respondents. This concurs with recent work such as Nicholson (2014) who has cautioned university leaders to reflect upon their positions within the organisational context: *'University leadership is not a personal fiefdom. As vice chancellor, senior manager, chief administrator, lecturer or union rep you are part of a system'* (2014, p. 29).

Whilst some of the respondents in the business schools indicated an awareness of distributed leadership theory, the leadership practices they reported did not appear to include distributed leadership or engaged followership. (Brookes, 2007; English, 2002; Jones, 2014).

For example, the H of D C1 observed that:

H of D C1: 'Although there's a lot of discussion about [distributed leadership] I think there's some degree of rhetoric about autonomy, and, if you like, distributed leadership; I think the reality is much less than the rhetoric would have you believe.'

The Focus Group Participant 1, who was one of two former Programme leaders from the B case-study Business School, provided a metaphor to describe the disorientating impact of his / her experiences of being subjected to several restructures and reorganisations:

Participant 1: 'It was just like being in a washing machine the whole time, never knowing when anyone was going to open the door. [Laughter] It was just like that. For me, my physical health was really awful when I left, really, really awful. I was just so worn out from it all.'

The absence of consultations regarding the reorganisations of his / her business school reported by the respondent concurs with Alvesson and Sveningsson's (2003) critique of the impact of micromanagement on organisational behaviour. A former programme director, Participant 1 also observed that the top down reorganisations had disaffected the academic staff.

Participant 1: 'They [managers] had a problem getting anybody to do anything, because everybody was so disaffected. People were so permanently stressed out. So really, they couldn't get people to do the jobs'.

The respondents' critiques convey an absence of collaborative distributed leadership, as discussed in the literature review (Allix and Gronn, 2005; Bolden *et al*, 2009; Erickson, 2010; Gronn, 2009a; Harris, 2008; Randall and Coakley, 2007; Spillane *et al*, 2004).

The literature review also considered how individuals might be both leaders and followers at different times within a complex environment such as a university. For example, it is possible that an academic may have significant influence upon the wider academic community of scholars, whilst not holding a formal leadership position within their own university (Alvesson, 2001; Peck and Dickinson, 2009; Rowley and Sherman, 2003). The research findings indicated that respondents without formal management posts were excluded from the decision making process and thereby felt that they had no influence on their working environment. This extended to research professors. Professor B1 reported that a Dean *'never got to know any of the staff within [the] department, I was relatively senior in there; I don't think [s/he] ever even knew my name'* (Professor B1).

This indicates a disinterest in engagement by managers with colleagues and an absence of distributed leadership. The disinterest of the Dean (though reportedly not the current B case Dean) in including a professor into his / her planning runs contrary to the recruitment of research qualified staff in the B case-study (Koen and Bitzer, 2010; Nicholson, 2014).

Evidently, if the leadership were attempting to create a more research-orientated Business School they would require the engagement and participation of their professoriate. The failure of leadership to include the professoriate in the recruitment of research-active staff indicates a lack of trust in their own senior academic colleagues. Yet without the engagement of the professors, the senior managements' aspiration to become a more research-focused business school is unlikely to progress (Macfarlane, 2011; Rayner *et al* 2010).

Indeed, the respondents in the B case indicated that the project by a Vice Chancellor to create a new Russell Group university by making teaching staff redundant and replacing them with research-active people had failed. Furthermore, the respondents reported a fail in student satisfaction too. It is arguable that the contextual knowledge gathered by this research was also available to the university leadership, had they chosen to engage their colleagues in the decision-making process and distributed the leadership.

In the findings chapter, it emerged that the Deans interviewed, with the exception of Dean B Current, who was the outlying Dean, tended towards low levels of distributed leadership. For example Dean C2 Acting asserted that consensus and leadership were in conflict in a university setting. *'I still don't think that's appropriate. So people are there [in committees] because of their role and function, really.'* (Dean C2 Acting). This attitude supports the perceptions of many of the respondents that anyone outside those in management was excluded from the business school planning.

Dean C2 Acting rejects distributive staff involvement on committees. Thereby only people who hold formal management positions sit on business school committees. This approach to leadership thereby concentrates decision making within the established management hierarchy. The respondent's leadership style is the antithesis of collegiate distributed leadership. Similarly Dean C Current remarked that universities are moving away from the traditions of collegiality. The respondent's perception of reality is that there is a need to move forward from the culture of collegiality to much more management control.. In common with

Dean C Acting, who was his / her predecessor, they both use their managerial position to actively remove any distribution of leadership. The research thereby surfaces more dissonance between leader behaviour and leadership theory than is indicated in the literature (Bolden *et al*, 2009; Bolden *et al*, 2008a; Brookes and Grint, 2010; Gronn, 2009a; Grint, 2008; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008; Mabey, 2013; Nicholson, 2014).

The reported non-distribution of leadership thereby disenfranchises academics from the opportunity to build their experience in leadership roles because they are not allowed to participate in the decision-making processes of their business schools. It has already been observed that in practice the decisions are formed outside the business schools and the Deans are acting as implementers of preformed plans rather than proactive leaders. Concurrently, the research reported an absence of talent development and staff retention (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). For example, Dean C1 Current offers some frank views upon his / her lived experiences of leadership in post-1992 universities and reflects that internal promotions are less likely than external appointments. His / her observations are similar to Dean A Current's who also commented that there is a lack of promotions from within a business school. The respondents' observations indicate an absence of staff development and talent management in business schools and a "false consciousness" (critical discourse) that external appointees are preferable to developing talent internally (Mabey, 2013). According to the report by the Commission on the Future of Management and Leadership (2014), one of the challenges for organisations is to develop talent by retaining people and building leaders from within the organisations. The respondents' reported here did not indicate that this was

happening for them. For example, in the B case-study, Dean B1 Current reported an absence of staff academic development even in areas such as doctoral study and academic publications. Additionally the Dean B 1 current expressed his/her frustrations about not being able to appoint the best person/s for teaching and management posts. His/her frustrations was that s/he needs people who have professional business experience, but very often those with such experience do not have a doctorate: *'The people I need don't have PhDs.'*

It is however worth noting that the context of the B case-study is one where several rounds of redundancies and an ambient level of insecurity and uncertainty reported by the academics would make succession planning difficult to implement within a context where many academics are new to the university and many are reportedly disaffected with the leadership. The B case-study respondents reported that many experienced academics had either left the business school or become disaffected and disengaged from the university's leadership. Furthermore, several respondents, including Deans, Professor and Lectures in the three case-studies commented that the concentration on appointing external appointees with doctorates was an impediment to having capable teaching and management staff. This contradicts the research into developing leadership from within an organisation (Commission on the Future of Management and Leadership 2014).

The comments on where decisions are made by the Deans interviewed indicate that many of the decisions are being made by the central university management. As such the Deans are not formulating policy, but instead being required to implement decisions made at a senior

university level. For example, Dean B Current reported that the *'policies are made by the senior management team of the university, which is a group of five people; the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice Chancellor, the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Finance and the Vice-Chancellor'*. So, the Dean of a business school does not form or even inform the decisions on recruitment strategy of his / her team. This further indicates a context which is hierarchical and top down rather than based on distributed leadership, even to the extent that the Dean has no input into the selection criteria of his / her staff. Dean B1 Current also identified that the recruitment behaviour noted above is more prevalent in the post-1992 universities than in other parts of the HE sector. S/he observed that in other institutions in which s/he had worked, which were red brick universities, senior academics such as a director of research at one business school did not have a PhD and at another Deputy Vice Chancellor did not have a PhD.

The H of D C1 observed that the absence of staff development and succession planning for leadership meant that the senior academic managers lacked leadership training and development. This is an interesting anomaly in a context, which purports to espouse the benefits of learning and professional development and has access to key texts in management development (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). However, H of D C1 observed that contemporary industry practice is putting a lot of time and effort into leadership, and into participation and a much more consultative approach, with managers as coaches, managers as facilitators, and that those changes of emphasis has been occurring for some time. However s/he commented that: *'That's all bypassed our education. They don't engage staff, in CPD,*

they don't engage in management and leadership training and development.'

The respondent highlighted the lack of management training in HE and the absence of distributed leadership. In an environment where there are academic specialists in leadership and management development, the universities could run a series of staff development workshops, which their own academics could produce, to address these developmental requirements (Brookes, 2007; Commission on the Future of Management and Leadership 2014).

The reported leader behaviours indicated a lack of senior management reflexivity as to the consequences of several iterations of revised strategic plans and staff restructuring with the adjacent churning of management and academic staff, which disengages followership. By contrast, many of the respondents were aware of, and capable of critically examining, what was happening to their environment. Indeed, the respondents have commented upon their working environments and shared those reflections in the interviews (Etherington, 2004; Johnson and Duberley, 2003; Patton, 2002). The research selected three cases; however respondents indicated that the issues surfacing in their universities were not unique. Indeed, the selection process for the cases avoided universities, which were at the bottom of the league tables where major contextual issues such as finance or quality standards could be precipitating major changes. For example, PAR 1 reported that since leaving the B university s/he had worked in many other universities and that in his / her subsequent experiences of post1992 universities the leadership behaviours were similar to the B case. Accordingly, the

research indicates major dissonances between what the respondents know of leadership research and theory and their sensed experiences of leadership in their own business school context (Geertz, 1973; Ponterotto, 2006). The reported absence of followership is concurrent with the respondents' critiques of how they perceive leadership is being conducted in their organisational context.

The reported contextual instabilities in the C, B and, to a lesser extent, A case-studies were reported as both past, present and continuing. For example, Dean C2 Acting was not interviewed for the permanent post of Dean at C case-study and left to become the Dean of another University. S/he then subsequently left that post to move to another business school. Dean B1 Present has since left the B University. The longest serving Dean in the three cases, Dean A1 Current, was appointed to a more senior post in another university. Accordingly, all the Deans except one newly appointed Dean at C have moved posts by mid-2014.

7.5 **Summary of the Contributions made by the Research**

The contributions made by this research provide new insights into leadership, followership and distributed leadership with respondents from three post 1992 university business schools.

This post-analysis summary considers the contributions to:

- *Theory*
- *Practice*
- *General contributions*

7.5.1 Contributions to Theory

A new framework (figure 4) was developed, which builds upon the work of Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) and was used to view the research from a constructivist perspective.

The framework thereby focused the research upon the perceptions of reality as expressed by the respondents. This provides a contribution of new and interesting insights into how the respondents' perceive leadership and followership within the context of their business schools. For example, respondents reported that the positional authority of managers is often applied in a manner which is not conducive to a climate of inclusive, consultative engagement with their academic colleagues. This was reported at a time when the respondents also observed repeated major changes which impacted upon their community, such as restructuring and redundancies.

Accordingly, the research has surfaced a need for a re-evaluation of what the problems might be in the case studied business schools. This could be addressed by a reflective review which is formed around the constructive inclusion and engagement of the academic community (Bolden *et al* 2008b; Collinson 2014; Collinson, 2006; Kelloway *et al*, 2000). However, the research also indicated that the retention of bureaucratic structures in the business schools studied was impeding the possibility of developing more consultative leadership (Bolden, 2011; Chreim, 2014; Lumby, 2013).

The research thereby contributes to our knowledge of the challenges for leadership and followership to foster engagement and consultation within a context where unreconstructed centres of control may impede creative solutions to new and uncertain situations (Bolden, *et al* 2014; Bolden, *et al* 2012; Chreim, 2014; Grint 2008a; Jones, 2014).

The perceptions of respondents reported in this research indicate that followership does not necessarily occur because a person has been designated a leader or because s/he has positional authority, either as a line manager or as a resources gatekeeper. Conversely, individuals may sometimes lead without positional authority, although the reported control of resources by management may limit the extent to which this flourishes (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008; Spillane 2006; Peck and Dickinson 2009). It is also possible, even likely, that an academic might be thought of as a leader in his / her field of research without necessarily being a management post holder. (Bolden *et al* 2008b; Collinson 2014; Collinson, 2006; Kelloway *et al*, 2000).

One of the perceptions, which commonly surfaced in what respondents shared, was the manner in which problems were addressed in their business schools. By reflecting upon the similarities in the respondents' perceptions to problems and the interventions, it appeared that problems which sit in Grint's (2008a, p16) '*Wicked*' typology, were being addressed as, '*Tame*' or '*Critical*.' This contributes to our awareness of, albeit unconscious choices to by managers to use interventions which have been previously applied in their organisational

context.

Many of the respondents' reported that the knowledge available in the business school was not being utilised. Indeed, the reported leadership behaviours were often represented as the antithesis of what the literature identifies as transformational leadership. Accordingly, the research indicates that, whilst robust, the transformational leadership literature needs to be re-interpreted to address the leadership deficits surfaced in the research; to be specific, to build upon the applied analysis in this research by exploring with academics what it means to a leader in a transforming higher educational context and how they need to change their leadership approach to meet those challenges.

For example, a blended approach, which realigns the focus of leadership and followership toward building a community, rather than the functionalist preoccupation with managing employees and hierarchy, could address some of the organisational issues, reported in the findings. *'Academics as citizens rather than as employees, managers or individuals'* (Bolden *et al* 2014, p754).

Followership theory supports the core value of engaging followers; the research reported similarities in the disengagement of respondents in all three studies. The successive and organisationally corrosive reorganisations may account for some of the unwillingness reported by academic staff to support their leadership by offering a constructively critical discourse. However the respondents commonly reported that they were not consulted. Indeed, one of the new Deans discouraged discussion and told the researcher that s/he had removed professors who had been too vocal.

Consequently, in the cases studied, the reported followership is much less evident than that which is presented in the literature. The low levels of reported engagement and followership contribute to our knowledge of the interconnectivity of followership and leadership. The research also contributes to our understanding of the challenges of serving constructively as a follower within a context that may be hierarchical and organised in a manner which does not encourage or support inclusive in decision making.

Respondents' in all three case studies reported a similar culture of top-down micro-management. The research thereby contributes to our knowledge of how leadership, which elects not to listen, consult or engage colleagues, tends to repeat similar strategic mistakes. This was evidenced by the recurrent reorganisations and successive replacement of senior staff in two of the cases.

7.5.2 Contributions to Practice

By the beginning of 2015 the three business schools selected for this research had undergone restructures, in two of the cases, multiple reorganisations and redundancies. The challenges which some post 1992 business schools need to address in 2015 onward, are likely to be more complex and different to those which can be resolved through controls and data reporting systems, or redundancies (Barnett, 2009; Connolly, 2003; Grint 2008; Marginson, 2006; Newman, 2002). According to The Hefce Report (2014), the changes have had an

asymmetric impact on the sector, with some universities growing and other contracting.

The problems, which were reported by respondents, indicate that the three post 1992 business schools studied in this research, need to address some complex problems (Grint, 2008a).

Accordingly, a change in management practice is required to address complex problems with new interventions to such '*wicked situations*' (Grint 2008a, p16). The research indicates that the repeated application of new controls systems, restructuring and redundancies is impacting negatively on leadership and followership and needs to be re-evaluated. For example, a more inclusive leadership is required, which nurtures and retains academic talent and actively encourages engagement in decisions by the academic community, and not just the managers and resource gatekeepers. The research proposes that blended leadership, which is consultative and distributed, will address some of the complex problems that were presented by the respondents.

The recurrent observations by the respondents' support the observations that people with leadership capabilities are either not applying for leadership posts or not being selected. Furthermore, some of the respondents' perceptions, regarding the formulation of leadership responsibilities and bureaucracy contribute to making such posts an unattractive career choice. For career academics with an interest in research, the time involved in leadership can also draw them away from scholarly activities and reduces the time available for conducting research, attending conferences and writing academic texts.

The selection process for managers was generally criticised by respondents at all levels as

being unfit for purpose. Furthermore, many of the respondents' perceptions, including some of the Deans, were that external applicants are more likely to be selected instead of promoting current faculty members. This is reported to have a negative impact on followership. It also demonstrates a failure by senior management to develop leaders from within their own business schools. Consequently, the research identified serious recruitment and selection and staff development failings in the business schools studied.

The respondents reported a ubiquitous selection requirement for research degrees or research activity for all posts, including those, which are primarily not concerned with research. This is simply a failure to apply well-established and documented recruitment practices regarding how to construct selection criteria to meet job specification requirements, (Nieto 2014). For example, according to the report by the Commission on the Future of Management and Leadership (2014), one of the challenges for organisations is to develop talent by retaining people and building leaders from within the organisations. The respondents' reported here did not indicated that this was happening for them.

Again this represents a failure to leverage the human resources knowledge of the academic Faculties. For example, the appointment of twelve Deans in ten years in the B case-study is the unfortunate result of flawed selection processes. To sack one or two Deans may have been unfortunate; to have twelve failures demonstrates managerial incompetence in recruitment and selection by successive sets of different senior leadership teams.

Accordingly, a reflective re-evaluation of what the problems might be and how to appropriately address them would appear to be a critical requirement. This would need to be in conjunction with an overhaul of recruitment strategies, talent management, retention policies and employee development strategies. Ironically, this development plan could be delivered by the academics in a business school. *'Physician heal thyself'* comes to mind.

7.5.3 General Contributions

The literature on management research tends to focus on quantitative data and functionalist discourse (Cunliffe *et al*, 2009; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008), which thereby leans towards positivist interpretations of reality. In contrast this research was aware of Schwartz's observations that by concentrating on discussions amongst senior management peers, those at the top of organisations may develop a perception of reality which may precipitate: *'over centralisation of operational decision making'* (Schwartz 1990, p.68). This research benefited from that perceptual foundation and went further by observing that the predominance of functionalist leadership, as reported by the respondents' has been detrimental to their collegiality and followership. The research thereby benefited from adopting a constructivist approach (Mabey and Morrell, 2011).

Indeed, according to the work by Alvesson (2003) the challenge for the researcher is to get beyond respondents' habits of avoiding dangerous opinions or indiscrete observations. The research has thereby made a contribution to knowledge about leadership, by interviewing

senior managers and lecturers who have survived several reorganisations and redundancies and were consequently likely to have been risk adverse in sharing their perceptions, experiences and stories about leadership in their business schools. In this respect the candid, sometimes emotionally charged testimonies of the respondents' evidences that the research methodology has enabled the gathering of information, which adds to our knowledge of leadership in a post-1992 university business school context.

The research was conducted predominantly through a constructivist approach, whilst also being cognisant of dialogic and critical discourses as well as functionalism. For example, the research drew upon the critical discourse in observing the possibilities of 'false consciousness' (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008, p. 128). Indeed, there were senior management respondents', whose views on leadership and strategic planning were not supported by published research or by their academic colleagues, yet they acted upon their own notions, believing that what they were doing was sound practice. Many of the respondents also shared illuminating stories about their experiences; so dialogic discourse influenced the research in studying the stories of leadership where respondents' illustrated their experiences through stories about leadership within their business school contexts (Gabriel, 2000).

Whilst this research is therefore primarily constructivist, the learning journey drew out an awareness of the potential for a multi-discourse approach to researching complex knowledge worker environments.

7.6 Chapter Summary

The respondent's reported that there are difficulties for both leadership and followership in a context of continuing instability (Collinson, 2014). According to Grint (2008a, p16) in such circumstances the unknown nature of the transformational changes are better addressed as a '*wicked situation*' in his model, which recommends a consultative approach to leadership in unknown situations. Bolden *et al* (2008b) also supports a consultative approach to leadership in an HE context.

The respondents in the three case studies shared a communality of perceptions regarding the instabilities produced by frequent Faculty reorganisations. For example, respondents reported frequent changes such as restructuring, including changes of Deans and management teams, redundancies and reorganisations, with little or no meaningful consultation (Koen and Bitzer, 2010; Kok *et al*, 2010).

The research studied whether distributed leadership was part of the sensed reality for the respondents. In conducting the interviews and analysing the respondents' perception of their leadership there were few examples of reported of distributed leadership. Indeed, the respondents' indicate contradictions between the aspirations for distributed consultative leadership and the bureaucratic controls used to manage their academic environment.

A shift in patterns of influence was in evidence, with much more rapid and recurrent

implementations of transforming restructuring of academic posts and redundancies than generally reported in the literature. The respondents' also criticised the regular restructuring that had produced adverse consequences upon their sense of employment security, peer esteem and collegial trust.

Senior leadership is reportedly a contributor to the problems within the cases studied. The respondents' perceptions of what leadership and followership should be like were dissonant to their reported felt experiences of leadership in their working contexts (Bass and Riggio, 2008; Bolden *et al*, 2011; Brookes, 2007; Collinson, 2007; Erickson, 2010; Gronn, 2009a; Peck and Dickinson, 2009; Spillane *et al*, 2004).

According to the report by the Commission on the Future of Management and Leadership (2014), one of the challenges for organisations is to develop talent by retaining people and building leaders from within the organisations. The respondents' reported here did not indicate that this was happening for them.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

The research asked the question: ‘What does Leadership and Followership mean in a Post-1992 University Business School?’ As a serving academic I was interested to learn more about how academic leaders and followers are responding to the transformational challenges in three post-1992 university business schools. In common with other providers in the HE sector, the set of universities which are identified as the post 1992 group in Figure 1 need to address a changing market for student recruitment. According to The Hefce Report (2014), those changes have had an asymmetric impact on the sector. Whilst some universities, including post 1992s, have gained in student numbers, those whose catchment of student recruitment is in the middle to lower grade point achievement have experienced a fall in student numbers and thereby revenue. It is therefore particularly relevant how those mid-range universities respond to the complex ‘*Wicked*’ challenges of their changing environment (Grint 2008a, p16). The respondents in the three post-1992 business schools studied reported experiencing transforming internal and external forces of change.

The respondents, including the Deans as well other academics in the business schools, reported a reduction in student numbers. This can be partly attributed to the increase competition for students. Yet respondents, both in senior management positions and lecturers, also reported that the actions which their universities had taken to improve their status, had in their perceptions, not addressed the situation. Indeed, some respondents thought that the

restructuring and numerous changes of people had exacerbated their difficulties (Bolden *et al* 2014; Chreim, 2014; Collinson and Collinson; 2009; Macfarlane, 2014). Consequently, the respondents from three post-1992 university business schools provide the leadership research community with a valuable insight of leadership and followership within a changing institutional environment.

Embarking upon this research journey led me through a process of reflection (Johnson and Duberley 2003) into what leadership and followership might be in a post-1992 university context. During the early stages of the research formulation, one possible avenue considered was the construction of a framework, whereby academic leaders could: *'build skills and knowledge to address performance gaps'* (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008 p.22). This approach would have taken the research into the functionalist discourse and thereby followed contemporary transformational leadership theorists such as (Alimo-Metcalfe *et al*, 2001; Bass and Avolio 1994; Bass and Riggio 2008; Goleman *et al*, 2002; Vecchio *et al*, 2008). Accordingly, the early research readings benefited from studying transformational leadership theory and how it might contribute to leadership in a business school context.

However, during the evolution of the research it became apparent that constructivist ontology would be more appropriate to this research, wherein multiple realities may be surfaced by academics experiencing leadership within transforming contexts (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008). Additionally, the selected sample group of academics are informed knowledge workers wherein: *'controlling what people do is hardly useful when dealing with knowledge workers. They cannot really be managed. They can only be led'* (Paauwe and Williams 2001

p.94). Reflection upon leadership in a knowledge-rich environment led to a re-evaluation because within knowledge-based organisations, such as a university, it is very likely that many views will exist of what should be progressed and how it may be implemented, and there will be alternative voices offering different senses and interpretations of the same circumstances containing: ‘multiple *versions of reality*,’ (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008, p13). It was all the more interesting to therefore find that many of the respondents across the three cases echoed similar sentiments regarding the absence of transforming leadership, disengagement instead of followership, and exclusion instead of distribution of leadership.

The research evaluated leadership and followership in post-1992 business schools, focusing on transformational leadership, followership and distributed leadership. Within the three business schools studied, the research indicated significant dissonances between the published leadership literature and the behaviours reported by the respondents. Accordingly, the research provides a new contribution to our knowledge of leadership behaviours in the practice of informed knowledge workers.

This research studied business school scholars because the selected respondents are better placed than the general management population, and more particularly academics in non-business disciplines, to have knowledge of and access to management theories. However, contrary to expectation, the research indicated considerably less translation of leadership theory into practice by knowledgeable academics within a business school context than may have been anticipated. Accordingly, one of the research’s contributions to knowledge is a

theory / practice gap within the knowledge-based communities studied.

In the cases of C and B and to a lesser extent A, the research reported a destabilising and organisationally disorientating lack of stability in leadership. In reviewing the Deans across the three cases there were interesting similarities in matters of tenure. During the data collection period Dean C2 Acting was not interviewed for the permanent post of Dean at C case-study and left to become the Dean of another university. S/he then subsequently left that post too and moved to another post-1992 business school. Since the interview with Dean B1 Present s/he has also left the B University, whilst the longest serving of the Deans in the three cases, Dean A1 Current, has also left the A University for a more senior appointment with another post-1992 university. Accordingly all the Deans, except one newly appointed Dean in the C University had moved posts by mid-2014. The consequential lack of leadership stability and continuity was reported to have a destabilising impact upon academic staff morale and their students' learning experience.

8.2 Transformational leadership

The respondents criticised a lack of consultation or interest by those in leadership in engaging their commitment to an agreed vision. This contributes an interesting divergence from the tenets of transformational leadership literature in an environment which purports to teach the management community how to lead others. The research thereby contributes a study

wherein there are significant variances between the transformational leadership literature and the respondents' experiences of leadership in context within informed knowledge contexts.

The concurrence of similar perceptions by respondents in the three cases suggests that people with leadership characteristics are either not applying for leadership posts in their Business Schools, or not being selected. Indeed, some of the respondents commented that they considered leadership in post-1992 universities to be an unattractive career choice. In either case the research indicates a significant area for development in the progression and talent management of academics in the post-1992 university business schools studied. For if, as is reported, the three business schools have to repeatedly fill leadership posts from outside their existing staff, this raises issues of progression and talent development.

8.3 Followership

Concurrent with the reported respondents' perception of leaders there was also an absence of reported followership. Indeed the research indicated more dissonance in followership behaviours than reported in the literature, which focused on studies of leadership throughout the university sector. This suggests that the three post-1992 universities studied here are experiencing greater follower disengagement than the broader higher education sector..

Instead of followership, there was evidence of respondents' disengagement from their leadership in each of the cases. Indeed, the numerous changes of strategic plans,

restructurings and redundancies were reported as disaffecting followership. The adjacent churning of management and academic staff also produced consequential fears and anxieties as reported by the respondents. Representatives from all posts – lecturers, senior lecturers, directors, heads of department, deans and professors expressed a similar perception to the multi changes and reorganisations they were experiencing.

The respondents' reported leadership behaviours of the senior management indicated an absence of reflexivity as to the consequences of their leadership choices on followership and staff engagement. By contrast, many of the respondents' provided incisive critical evaluations of what was happening in their environment, indicating their theoretical awareness of leadership and followership.

Respondents also displayed dissonant emotions regarding what they intellectually knew leadership and followership could be and their sensed reality of what leadership has become in their context. The research indicates greater dissonances between the respondents' knowledge of leadership research and theory and their sensed experiences of leadership in their own business school context than those generally reported in the literature. Accordingly, the lack of followership is concurrent with the respondents' critiques of how they perceive leadership is being conducted in their organisational contexts

8.4 Distributed and Blended Leadership

The research indicated the use of bureaucratic structures to exert control by people who operate as academic administrative gatekeepers. In some respondents' perceptions, there is an abuse of control by managers, in retaining control over resources and decision-making. As such there were reported centres of undistributed control, which impacted on what respondents, perceived to be a lack of equity within their working environment (Lumby, 2013).

The relationships between members of these communities of scholars and those who lead their business schools are complex and multifaceted. In situations wherein the time in post for a Dean or senior manager was often less than their academic colleagues, respondents expressed a sense that there was no coherent stability of leadership. Yet the respondents were often animated in sharing how the complex situations they recounted might be addressed by cooperative initiatives which engage colleagues in decision making and problem solutions (Bolden *et al* 2014; Collinson, 2014; Collinson and Collinson 2009; Grint 2008a).

The research indicated that proactive followership and consultative leadership could address some of the challenges which respondents identified in their working environment (Bolden, 2011; Chreim, 2014; Gronn, 2009a; Gronn, 2009b). The reported instabilities in leadership teams and the repeated implementations of reorganisations and redundancies were seen as contributing to an exacerbation of problems rather than as the solutions. However, a blended

leadership approach, which realigns the focus of leadership and followership toward building a community, rather than the functionalist preoccupation with managing employees and hierarchy could address some of the organisational issues, reported in the findings.

'Academics as citizens rather than as employees, managers or individuals' (Bolden *et al* 2014, p754).

Instead, the respondents' reported an absence of collective working as a community.

Conversely, blended leadership could draw together the administrative, academic and intellectual talents to build a more cooperative community. As such this approach would stabilise the working environment and encourage active engagement in the life and well being of the community. *'This conceptual framework for blended leadership builds on the research outcomes of recent empirical research into a distributed leadership,'* Jones, *et al* 2014 p149). The approach advocated by Jones, *et al* (2014) builds upon the work of Bolden *et al* (2008a; (2008b).

The literature review considered the body of research which has studied distributed leadership and advocated its efficacy in educational leadership, including (Bolden *et al*, 2008a; Bolden *et al*, 2009; Gronn 2000; Jones 2014; Spillane 2006; Woods *et al*, 2004).

However, the respondents in this research reported little by way of distributed leadership. Indeed, for some of the Deans interviewed, exclusion of colleagues from decision making better described their leadership approach than the tenets of distribution and inclusion. This is particularly interesting within the context of business schools where the distributed leadership research is readily available and forms part of the contemporary discourse of what leadership

is within educational establishments.

The research thereby contributes an interesting strand of knowledge into leader behaviours regarding the non-distribution of leadership. In the literature review there were indications that the context, culture, existing structures and the perceptions of what kind of work is esteemed are likely to influence whether distributed leadership may serve a particular institution (Anderson *et al*, 2005). This is noted here because the numerous changes of Deans and other senior managers would suggest that the reported non-inclusive leader behaviours are not that of one individual's perchance for autocracy, but rather part of the prevailing institutional norms and moreover, norms which are replicated in three different cases.

8.5 Wicked Problems: Tame or Critical Interventions

The research utilised Grint's (2008a,p16) framework (Figure3) to reflect upon the leadership/followership problems which respondents' reported experiencing in their business schools. The respondents' who shared their perceptions of how problem situations were addressed included five Deans who were directly involved in addressing problems in the business schools.

In reviewing the findings, similarities surfaced in the respondents' perceptions regarding the problems they were experiencing in their business schools. By reviewing what the respondents' share through Grint's (2008a, p16) framework, it became evidence that the

problems described sat in the typology identified as '*Wicked*.' This was an interesting because what the respondents' descriptions of the interventions deployed to resolve those problems appear to sit in the '*Tame*' to, '*organise a process*' or '*Critical*' to, '*provide answers*' approaches in Grint's descriptions (2008a, p16).

Consequently, the research surfaced some interesting similarities across the three cases, indicating a predisposition for '*Tame*' and '*Critical*' problem solutions, as perceived by the respondents. However, '*Tame*' or '*Critical*' interventions, which according to Grint (2008a, p16) are suitable when applied to the appropriate situations, are insufficiently adaptive and consultative to meet '*wicked*' challenges (Grint 2008a; Clarke and Butcher 2009). Moreover, complex problems tend to have interpersonal and organisational political dimensions, which are likely to be exacerbated by being ignored by a, '*Tame*' or '*Critical*' intervention.

For example, there were similarities in what the respondents reported in each of the three cases regarding an absence of consultation in the decision-making processes. Hence, the people making decisions about how to address the challenges and problems appear to favour defaulting to two of the three approaches in Grint's framework (2008a) which are least likely to provide solutions to complex problems in knowledge based, academic community contexts (Bolden *et al* 2014; Chreim, 2014; Gronn, 2009a; Macfarlane, 2014).

8.6 **Suggestions for Further Research**

The research provided a rich volume of respondent data from three business schools. It was interesting as a researcher to note the communality of observations from academics in similar posts in different business schools. It would be interesting for other researchers to use the research model in a sample of pre-1992 universities and a sample of Russell Group universities. The current research suggests that those groups would be likely to report more collegiality and distributed leadership than in the three post-1992s studied in this research.

However, this research has contributed a significantly different view of leadership in three post-1992 university business schools than would be expected by reading the current literature. Hence, other researchers may also find dissonances in leadership theory and practice in other parts of the sector, though perhaps, that may or may not be as pronounced as surfaced by the respondents in the three cases reported on here.

8.7 **Limitations**

The study of three business schools surfaced many threads of study into leadership and followership behaviour in a knowledge-rich context. In the original research plan there were to be a selection of respondents from two business schools, one where the Dean had been in place for a number of years and another where there had been several recent incumbents. However, the inclusion of the third B case brought additional material, which was more

intense than the other two cases. It also provided assurance by replicating the insights gathered from the C and A cases. The limitation was that conducting a third case and reviewing the transcripts took additional time, but nevertheless the investment added to the depth of the research materials. Indeed, respondents in the B case provided some of the most poignant and emotionally charged observations about leadership and followership in a post-1992 university business school.

This research does not claim generalisability. However it was surprising to observe the similarity of attitudes expressed by similar post holders in three different universities. Indeed, the similarities between respondents from different business schools, though in similar job roles was of particular interest is so much as they were offering similar perceptions of their different environments.

The nature of the research into business schools meant that a number of universities that I approached politely refused to allow access. In retrospect this was understandable and could be a limitation to be considered if other researchers were planning to take the research model into other universities.

8.8 Chapter Contributions

This section briefly reviews the contribution of each chapter to the research.

Chapter One Introduced the environmental context to the research and the research questions.

Chapter Two opened the literature review, focusing on leadership and followership in a post-1992 university business school context.

Chapter Three is the second literature review chapter and focused in on leadership in higher education.

Chapter Four reflected upon the philosophical perspectives underpinning the research, reflexivity, and the discussion of discourses.

Chapter Five set out the research objectives and the constructivist, qualitative methodology adopted. The sampling strategy was discussed, together with the choice of interviews and coding to study the data within thick description of context. The ethical considerations for the research were also addressed.

Chapter Six presented the findings from respondents in the three case-studies.

The themes which emerged from the research were:

- *Theme 1: Transforming Leadership in a Change Context*
- *Theme 2: Instability Jeopardising the Possibility of Followership*
- *Theme 3: Non-distribution of Leadership*

Chapter Seven critically evaluated the research findings in relation to the literature review and the themes, which emerged from the primary research.

Chapter Eight concluded the thesis, setting out the contribution to leadership knowledge, recommendations for future research and limitations.

8.9 Chapter summary

The research evaluated leadership and followership, focusing on transformational leadership, followership and distributed leadership. Within the three business schools studied, the experiences reported by the respondents' indicated dissonances between those experiences and how knowledge workers could be led, according to the leadership literature which was discussed in the literature review chapters (Bolden, *et al* 2014; Chreim, 2014; Collinson, 2014; Jones, *et al* 2014).

In reviewing what the respondents' reported across the three cases there were interesting similarities in matters regarding tenure and employment stability. For example, during the course of the research there were multiple changes of Deans. Hence, Dean C2 Acting was not interviewed for the permanent post of Dean at C case-study and left to become the Dean of another university. S/he then subsequently left that post too. Dean B1 Present has also left the B University, whilst the longest serving of the Deans in the three cases, Dean A1 Current, has also left the A University for a more senior appointment with another post-1992 university. Accordingly all the Deans, except one newly appointed Dean in the C University had moved posts by late 2014/early 2015.

The concurrence of similar perceptions by respondents in the three cases suggests that the

leadership they have experienced does not concur with their perceptions of what leadership should be. Indeed, some of the respondents commented that they considered leadership in post-1992 universities to be an unattractive career choice.

The research indicated similarities in how problems are addressed as, '*Tame*' or '*Critical*' when the descriptions of problems which respondents, including five Deans offer suggests that the problems, sit in the '*Wicked*' typology (Grint, 2008a, p16). This contributes to our awareness of, albeit unconscious choices by people to apply problem solving approaches which require less consultation.

It is clear from this research that a leader will not secure willing followership simply because s/he is a gatekeeper. Conversely, individuals may sometimes lead without positional authority, although the reported control of resources by management may limit the extent to which this flourishes (Mabey and Finch-Lees 2008; Spillane 2006; Peck and Dickinson 2009). Furthermore, it is possible, even likely, that academics will be regarded as leaders in their field of research without necessarily being management post-holders (Bolden *et al* 2008b; Collinson 2014; Collinson, 2006; Kelloway *et al*, 2000).

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APPENDIX 1 Research Consent Form

By Nieto, M. L. (2006) *An Introduction to HRM: An Integrated Approach*. Basingstoke:
Palgrave Mcmillan.

CONSENT FORM FOR HR RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY.... Student/s at

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this [research]. The research title is.....

*Your consent to participate in this research is appreciated. As a research participant you
should be aware of your rights to:*

- 1. Refuse participation whenever and for whatever reason you wish.*
- 2. Withdraw from participating at any time.*
- 3. Refuse to answer any question or complete all or parts of a questionnaire.*
- 4. Have your anonymity maintained, if you so request.*
- 5. Decide to retain anonymity regarding part or all of any responses you provide.*
- 6. Be able to reject the use of data gathering devices such as tape recorders and video cameras.*
- 7.*

Signed by Researcher/s:

Signed by Respondent:

Date:

Appendix 2: University Of Birmingham Application For Ethical Review

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX 3: An example of a full transcript. The Participant Information Sheet and the Interview Schedule

TRANSCRIPT

FOR: Regent's University London – Michael Nieto

TITLE: Dean

TYPE: Interview

CONVENTION: Smart Verbatim

AUDIO LENGTH: 49 mins

TRANSCRIBER: EST/AJ1

AT: ESSENTIAL SECRETARY LTD

COMPLETION DATE: 18.02.2013

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES:

Any difficulties experienced, accents and general comments

NUMBER OF UNCLEARs

4

NUMBER OF INAUDIBLES

0

SPELL CHECK PERFORMED	Yes	PROOFING PERFORMED	Yes
AUDIO QUALITY	Good		
SPEAKER RELATED ISSUES	None		
EQUIPMENT RELATED ISSUES	None		
TERMINOLOGY ISSUES	Some names may need correcting		
OTHER COMMENTS			

Please find attached your completed transcript.

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Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the attached transcript is an accurate record of your audio recording, sometimes difficulties are encountered in understanding technical words, people speaking with a foreign accent and in some cases when somebody is speaking from a crowded room with a lot of background noise and from mobile phones.

Where we have had difficulty understanding words we have indicated this as [unclear] with the appropriate time stamp, or simply attempted to spell the word phonetically but followed it with [ph].

[Start of recording]

[Start of dean 1]

INT: Right, we're recording now. My name is Michael Nieto I'm a research student PhD from the University of Birmingham, I'm studying what does it mean to be a leader or a follower in a post-1992 university business school. Now everything

you say on here will be confidential apart from my supervisor, second supervisor and an external examiner, no mention will be made of your name, this department or the university itself. If at any point you decide you do not wish to have anything included it will automatically be struck, and if you make a mistake and say 'I'm at the university of ABC' I'll delete it from the transcript anyway, so it will be cleared. You made a comment about the documentation that I sent to you, would you care to begin by commenting on that please?

RES: Yes, thank you Michael. My previous institution I was responsible for actually formulating and implementing the ethical clearance policy for research students and having received your documentation and had a chance to read it in advance of this interview I was very impressed by the quality of it and it was actually one of the things that encouraged me to agree to participate in this research work.

INT: Thank you very much Professor, that will certainly be fed back the University of Birmingham and no doubt they'll be encouraged and so will my supervisors. Okay, the research questions that I will be asking will be open-ended, that's giving you the most opportunity to speak and as of now I hope to speak very little unless to prompt. So I'm following on from the work of Burgoyne and James 2006 in terms of open-ended questions about how, what, why. So to begin with in your experience in this business school what is it like to be the dean?

RES: Well I suppose first and foremost it's challenging and enjoyable, it's professionally fulfilling and it has to be doesn't it because why would you get out of bed in the morning if you didn't enjoy what you were doing and relish the opportunities that it gave you? That doesn't necessarily mean to say that it's all been entirely straightforward and plain sailing, there are significant challenges and tensions here and I suppose one of the things that occupies me on a regular basis is the

issue of me as the dean somewhere between a rock and a hard place, between the rock of the central university senior management team in terms of their requirements and expectations and the hard place of the marketplace and actually delivering against that. And moderating the demands from above that are made upon me with what I think is reasonable to ask of my staff.

INT: Can I ask you to expand a little bit more about the rock and the hard place because I've had similar comments but I'd like to hear your perception of this, why do you think the demands are, if you like, different from above to those of the marketplace?

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RES: Sure, well I came into this role after senior management experience at a previous institution and I started my career at a similar institution to that, so I've had many years of experience in the academic world and before that I was a senior manager, chief executive officer and so on, in industry. So I've had a lot of senior management experience and coming into this institution really for me at the moment it's optional whether or not I wish to work, I can retire, I can do other things if I wish but I actually quite enjoy what I'm doing. But when I was talking to the Vice-Chancellor about my expectations of this role one of the things I said was that I'm looking for a collegial and supportive environment, I'm looking to work with people who I can enjoy working and who provide me with firstly the resources that I need to do the job and secondly will act as a sounding board to the way I'm running the school. And my bottom line really is that I regard my relationship with the university as through the budget, as the dean of the business school if I deliver the budget then what I do is up to me. What I've subsequently found is that the senior management team don't quite see it that way, they see the structure as a much more hierarchical one where they are at

the peak of the pyramid and my job is to respond to the requirements that are placed upon me, I don't necessarily see it that way and it does set up a few tensions. Combined with which I think it's fair to say that some of the members of the senior management team are not particularly experienced and I don't think particularly understand the role of a business school within the portfolio of a university because I do think that business schools are distinct from other types of schools.

INT: Thank you, and in terms of the other part of it, the staff, if you like the followers if you may wish to describe them that way, you may not, how do you think their perception is of this rock and a hard place, which you described earlier?

RES: Well I think there is a reasonably widespread view as to the nature of the senior management team and my job, as I see it, is to insulate them from that, my job's to hold the umbrella up and to protect my team and my staff from the fallout that comes from that. So my job is to manage upwards in some senses. I think I make it my job to be seen to be visible and to be seen to be accountable to my staff, I want them to be clear as to what the expectations are and I try and make it evident in a number of different ways, through school meetings, through the communications that we have, so that the direction is seen to come from me.

INT: Okay, thank you. So how do you think those around you are experiencing leadership in this business school? So exploring a little bit more of perhaps heads of department, perhaps a junior lecturer, what is your impression of how they're seeing leadership, both perhaps from you and from above?

RES: Well I'd like to think that my style is a reasonable consultative one, we're privileged to work in an academic environment, we get lots of freedom that you

don't get in the commercial world, we have a level of job security that others would envy and we have lots of opportunity to pursue things that are of interest to us, so it is a privileged environment. Equally I think as a consequence people have a lot of freedom so as a manager I think if I have to exercise the authority and the power of the position that I have, if I actually have to do that then I've probably lost the argument anyway. I need to work through persuasion, through consultation, through engagement with people and what I try to do with my staff is to encourage them to accept responsibility and I try and pass responsibility down to them so that instead of me making all the decisions, and inevitably I'm not going to make the right decisions all the time, or even some of the time, I involve and engage them in that decision making process.

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INT: What, in your experience, within a business school context, because you talked about other contexts, but in a business school context what in your experience are the reasons that people might be regarded as a leader rather than someone else?

RES: The reasons why people might be regarded as a leader, well firstly I think because of their intellectual leadership, the fact that they dominate their field of study, I think we clearly see that with some of our colleagues within the school. Others perhaps because of the time that they've been here and the knowledge that they've acquired about systems and procedures and how the school operates, that too I think gives people presence and if you like authority within the school. Others gain respect because of their intellectual capability because of their ability to achieve in their field or maybe because of the dint of their sheer hard work and the respect that that gathers.

INT: Interesting, thank you. So thinking now about people who do not have formal

leadership roles, you're in a formal leadership role and a head of department is, a head of research might be, but thinking about people who are not what do you think enables those sorts of people to express informal leadership in this context, outside of formal roles given the title?

RES: I think with those who don't have a formal leadership role, and in fact in the school actually many people do have some responsibility or another even if it's just for leading a unit and coordinating a unit or a module that we deliver, I think what's important is to give freedom, the freedom in which to operate. So that if they have the opportunity perhaps to invite an overseas guest to come and spend some time with us or to organise a seminar series or to initiate a piece of research with a colleague they feel that they're empowered to do so, that that initiative is not suppressed, they don't have to necessarily seek permission but they might wish to share the thought and idea and gain positive feedback on it.

INT: In terms of the environment as you perceive it now, the models that I'm sure you know, [unclear-11:24] transformation or transactional, transforming organisations obviously are going through a lot of change, transactional less so. How would you describe your business school at this time?

RES: Well yes, I'm familiar with the transformation or transactional model, in fact I've published on it, and I would like to think that people would see this as a transformational leadership style, that actually I put something into this, that I don't necessarily have to commit to but because I do people feel that we're moving forward, people feel that there is a positive direction to the school and that somebody actually cares about how the school is moving ahead and is actively managing that, that's what I'd like to think.

INT: Okay, to what extent do you feel that you're personally constrained or that others

might be purposely constrained through access to resources or control of resources or other sources of power, I'll leave it as open as that?

RES: Well use of resources, actually as a business school firstly we don't need much in the way of resources, we don't need laboratories or equipment or field trips or anything like that, so we're relatively cheap to resource, in fact the limiting constraint that we have is not necessarily the number of students that we can recruit but actually that appropriate quality and quantity of people to teach them, my biggest challenge is recruiting the right people to make the school work. Paradoxically with the difficulties that we have in the new regime of student fees, that has led to somewhat poorer recruitment in other parts of the university, whilst we have recruited to numbers, so actually in relative terms we're now seen as being much more important and valuable in the portfolio of schools within the university, so that actually gives me a bit more power in negotiating the resources that I want. There are constraints that are placed upon us, which I find extremely frustrating, for example one of the constraints is that everybody we recruit must have a PhD. Now if you take some of the subjects that we teach like accounting and law for example, we require people who are professionally qualified in those respects but very often they don't have PhDs, so we're between that rock and a hard place that I mentioned earlier, I'm required to recruit people with PhDs but the people I need don't have PhDs. So we go through some shadow dancing in order that I can enable certain people to change their minds with grace and dignity without being seen to back down on a fundamental statement of policy.

INT: Your inference is therefore that this is not your policy as dean, if it's not your policy could you advise and inform me whose it is, how it was constructed and its purpose, please?

RES: The policy has been set by the senior management team of the university, which is a group of five people.

INT: That would be the?

RES: That would be the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice Chancellor, the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Finance and the Vice-Chancellor himself.

INT: Okay.

RES: And those people have devised the next six-year plan for the university and within that they've established what they call key performance indicators, in management terms we wouldn't call them key performance indicators but that's another topic for another day perhaps. One of those KPIs is that 70% of staff should have a PhD, and this is a hangover really from the former post-'92 days when, as a strongly teaching institution, I think only just over 20% of staff had PhDs, so this is part of perhaps the insecurity that post-'92s feel, that they have to boost up the PhD population, and this is applied as a blanket requirement without any consideration for peculiarities of accountancy or law for example.

INT: Interesting, thank you. Moving on to areas now that are derived from Professor Erickson's work on social interaction within higher education. So do you socialise, lunch or other places, with your staff or not, do you see your staff socialising, what kind of interactions do you see happening around you in this context?

RES: I think generally speaking there's not a huge amount of social interaction within the staff of the business school, we don't have, for example, clubs and societies, you don't see people going off to play five a side football or going down to the pub after a busy day or anything like that. Of course people form friendships

and liaisons, they work closely together, their interests align and we have social events, just recently we had our Christmas dinner, which a large number of us went to. Within the workplace we do organise the odd coffee mornings, school meetings, lunch, perhaps for seminars and so on we'll organise refreshments to get people to come along and we encourage that and that sort of informal social interaction because I think that's a way in which people engage in conversations which they otherwise wouldn't have, which potentially are beneficial. But I wouldn't say that there is a strong social rapport within the school, people enjoy friendly, positive relationships with each other but they're not in that sense friends.

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INT: Okay, thank you. How much time do you spend with the senior management type team, whether it be formally or informally, you've mentioned them a couple of times before?

RES: You mean the university leadership team?

INT: Yeah, your boss if you like.

RES: My boss, as little as possible! We have a formal university leadership team meeting every month and that's all the heads, all the senior staff basically, there will be a group of about 15 of us around the meeting table. Other than that I maybe meet up with my immediate boss, who's the Deputy Vice Chancellor, maybe once a month and there may be occasional email contact and that's about it really.

INT: How do you feel about that?

RES: As far as I'm concerned the less contact I have with [him/her] the better, I don't enjoy a strong rapport with [this person] and I don't respect him/her as a

manager.

INT: That's an interesting observation, coming from someone who has a lot of knowledge about management, you've explained before your experience in senior management as a CEO, how do you think that person has got to that position of leadership in this context, accepting your appraisal of his or her skill set?

RES: Well if we refer back to the transformational, transactional model I would class his style as transactional, he acts in his/her own self-interest.

INT: Right, and how long has that person been with this particular business school?

RES: Just a little less than me, so about 18 months or so. I was appointed to the role and this particular person, their appointment was announced shortly before I actually started and my telephone started ringing immediately with one or two friends and colleagues phoning me up and saying you might be interested to know a little bit about this particular person, which I was.

INT: And I won't make an assumption, was the overview complementary to this person's management skills or less than complementary?

RES: This was friendly advice as to how to manage myself in what might be interesting circumstances.

INT: Okay, thank you. I'm looking at perceptions of reality, different people have different perceptions of reality, this is based on constructivism where we view the world, I know you understand this but I'm doing it more for the recording, I'm not trying to inform you Professor, I'm aware that you understand these things! In terms of perceptions of reality, if one were to interview three, four, five members of your junior staff, do you think their perceptions of reality would

be similar to yours, different, and in what way?

RES: I think it depends which particular department you talked to.

INT: Just this department, within this school.

RES: Within the business school?

INT: Yeah.

RES: Well, people have come from different directions here and you would find a range of views. If you talk to the law department, well everything is slightly different in law, every time I pass an opinion people look at me and say 'ah well of course what you need to understand is it's slightly different in law', in other words they're telling me that I don't understand and my opinion isn't valued and it may well be slightly different in law but it's not that different. And if you talk to the xxxx department then you'll get a very different perspective, there are some very different views in there, but talking to the average, as it were, man in the classroom here I think you'd get a not dissimilar view but you probably wouldn't get quite such an extreme one as you get from me.

INT: Okay, so your perception is that the xxxx school has a, if you like, a view that they are different?

RES: xxxx is a department within the business school.

INT: So the law group would see themselves as slightly different?

RES: Slightly differently, yeah.

INT: And the xxxx group?

RES: There are factions within the xxxx group that have very different perspectives,

yeah.

INT: And different in the sense of what way?

RES: One particular group is well established, long serving and probably teaching orientated. There's a newer tranche of people who've recently been recruited who see themselves as researchers and they refer to themselves as researchers and they, I think, don't necessarily buy into my broader philosophy of the role of an academic within the business school, which is that everybody should teach, everybody should research, everybody should undertake administrative and citizenship duties but not necessarily to the same extent, we should play to our strengths.

INT: Interesting, and that differentiates a post-1992 to, say for example, a Russell Group university I think.

RES: It could well do, it could well do, yeah, yeah. I can think of schools that I'm familiar with where the role of the faculty is almost exclusively to research and the teaching is done by adjunct staff who are not on the books and therefore not counted for ref purposes and one sees various permutations like that in schools. So in that sense we're different from some of those Russell Group type schools.

INT: That's interesting because if we can connect that concept to your earlier overview of the senior management groups desire to have everybody with a PhD, to what extent or not do you believe that their plan in getting everybody with a PhD is to create a research university or do they have a completely different agenda?

RES: I don't see them as aspiring to be a Russell Group university and I don't actually disagree with the principle that we should employ people with PhDs, I mean the requirement is that actually 70% of people should have PhDs, so there's still

nearly a third who don't require one. And actually as a business school that xxxx [the date of strategic plan which might be a used to identify the business school has been removed] metric that's been put in place has already been met, in fact it's exceeded slightly within the business school, so I don't have a problem with the requirement for a PhD and for people to be research active, of course as academics that's our job but business is close to practice and for that we sometimes need practitioners.

INT: Yeah, I agree. I was starting to explore what their motives, in your perception, were, of leading to this, you mentioned about a group of people who see themselves as researchers and groups who see themselves as teachers and whether the senior management were wanting to cultivate a research environment?

RES: Oh certainly we want to improve the research environment, there's no question about that, I don't think many people would argue with that either, the question is how we do it.

INT: Indeed. Okay as s round off, this is an open question in terms of your views, stories that have come to your mind, and we can all say 'oh well when I came to this business school this was happening and somebody said this' I think you mentioned something before we had the tape running about war zone I think it was. So any story you like that typifies to you something which gives me a sense of what it's like to be in this context, like I say, a previous story or something else you might like to mention.

RES: Well this business school has had a very chequered history and I came here a couple of years ago recognising that it was essentially a turnaround situation, something had to happen and it had to happen fairly quickly to improve things,

there had been numerous previous incumbents in this role, some of whom had only stayed for a year or less, with various people serving in interregnum when of course you can't actually do anything because you haven't got the role, you're just simply there to mind the shop. And one of the things that struck me when I first got here was that as I went around talking to people one of the things that people said to me was 'do you realise I've been here X number of years and I've had Y number of deans and temporary deans in that time?' and it's something staggering like people who've been here ten years have had 12 different deans, it's absolutely incredible. So very much a lack of stability, a lack of clear strategy, lack of clear direction, and I have to say some very indifferent quality managers, the degree of incompetence was extraordinary. And when I got here the first thing I did was to go around and meet each academic individually and have a chat with them, well what I was actually doing was what you're doing now, I was interviewing them against a proforma but they didn't necessarily realise that that was the case. And I was data gathering, I was data gathering for subsequent analysis and I was listening.

INT: Very good rich data I imagine, you could write a paper on that.

RES: Oh absolutely, well I've still got the data and when I have the time I might well do so. But I was listening very carefully to what people were saying, as a qualitative researcher I was trying to abstract meaning from what people were saying, so I was asking open-ended questions, 'what's it like to work here?' and I received some really shocking answers. One person said to me 'well working here for the past few years has been like working in a war zone', other people said 'I've only registered for PhD because I'd get sacked if I didn't'. I mean really extraordinary things and the vehemence with which people made these statements and the extreme nature of the comments that I received really,

really shook me and it really demonstrated to me the depth of feeling and actually the very low morale that existed in the business school at that time and I used that as the basis on which to build my strategy and to move forward.

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INT: When you heard those various comments and you said 'build a strategy to go forward' what was it in terms of leadership that you felt you could do for these people, which clearly I think you've said, and correct me if I'm wrong, somebody had been here 10 years and had 12 deans?

RES: Yeah, something like that, yes.

INT: Okay, for a person like that and use that person as a metaphor for the general, what did you feel that you could bring to this Professor, which the other 12 ladies and gentlemen couldn't or didn't?

RES: I think one of the things, people are people, they may have PhDs and they may be very august in their field but they're still people and fundamentally I think what people want to see is clear direction, they want somebody to stand up and say 'this is where we're going' and to provide that direction and that guidance. Also to acknowledge that there are very real issues, to acknowledge what the issues are and then say what we're going to do about it. And actually I think in many ways my job was a very simple one, it's a business school, we teach, we research, we administer, it's not a complicated job, we're not navigating a nuclear powered submarine or anything, we're just running a business school. So what needs to be done is relatively simple but that's not to say that it's easy because you're dealing with articulate, intelligent people, you're dealing with people who're not afraid to speak their mind, so you've got to win hearts and minds in this, you've got to take people with you. So the first thing I did after I

conducted my analysis was to get everybody together and have a school meeting and I made sure that we had a buffet lunch beforehand, that we had a nice long tea break in the middle and we had some breakout sessions, simply so that people could talk to each other and start to mix and meet with each other. The first thing I did in making my opening presentation was to acknowledge the problems that the school had and I actually put up on the screen some of the quotations that people had given me.

INT: And unattributed?

RES: Un-attributed, absolutely, absolutely. But I took great care to quote them word for word and those people were in the room and maybe I just gave them a little nod just so that I acknowledged that their words had sunk home and made sense. And then having reviewed that the next step was what are we going to do about it? And I then spelt out the things that we were going to do to take the school forward and each school meeting that we have I bring up that agenda of issues and say 'right, this is what we've done, this is where we are, this is how we've moved forward'. So we've now got a clear plan, a clear direction, we've got for the first time for years people have had an appraisal and had the opportunity to sit down and talk about their work and their views and their opinions. This is not complicated stuff but it doesn't need to be complicated to be effective.

INT: And how long did it take you to meet all of the staff on the one-to-ones?

RES: Yeah, probably a couple of months.

INT: So two months of research and then how long after that did you have the first general group meeting?

RES: Let me see, that was probably about three months. And I then subsequently, that

would have taken us up to about the summer, the middle of the summer, and then in the Autumn I then had to make a presentation to the university board, not the senior management team of the university but the board of governors as it were of the university. They were extremely concerned about the state of the business school and they'd taken on this new dean of the business school who'd been doing whatever it is he'd been doing and they wanted to jolly well hear what he had to say for himself. So I stood up and I told them and left them in no doubt as to the challenges that the school had and what I was going to do about it.

INT: Okay, in terms of social, if I was working for you as a lecturer, how easy or not easy would it be to meet you, either formally or informally?

RES: Absolutely, one of the things that happened to me, when I was first here I was being taken around the building, the rabbit run of a building that we have by my PA and I was doing the meet and greet and all these faces were just passing in front of me. And we went into one office and my PA said 'oh this is so and so, s/he's the new dean of the business school' and the xxx was visibly shocked and s/he said 'good god, I've never seen the dean of the business school' and s/he actually reached into the drawer of his desk and got a camera out and took a photograph of me to prove that s/he'd seen the dean of the business school. And I thought that was absolutely shocking, absolutely shocking, so I make a point of walking around the building, it's staggering isn't it?

INT: It is, yes!

RES: It's staggering. Just this morning I walked around the building to see who was in and I just stopped by somebody's desk and have a chat, whether they're an administrator or a lecturer or a professor and we're on a split site here, if I go to

the other site for a meeting I try and find the time to go and walk around the building and just put my head around an office door and have a chat. There's one lady whose daughter's been very ill so we have a chat about that, there's another lady whose son's just gone to university so we might discuss that, somebody else who's working on a really interesting piece of research for another school so I might get an update on that. And I just make a point of talking to people, just treating them as people, so that they don't see me as this distant, remote authoritarian figure, they see me just as the dean of the school and if they want to raise something with me they can. I try and be a very easy going, relaxed kind of [person] so that people feel free to give me feedback and to tell me what they think and I'm very, very open to that and I don't mind what people say but the one thing that really does annoy me and upset me is if people aren't pulling their weight and then they see another side of me. There's a delicate balance as an academic between acting in your own self-interest, building your CV of publications to get the senior lectureship or the chair or whatever it might be and acting collegially, working with other people and helping supporting the university, perhaps attending the committees, the exam boards, doing your marking on time and all of that sort of stuff. And I acknowledge that people naturally want to pursue their careers but I do expect them to do their bit and if they're not doing their bit I can be quite firm with people. In fact, I've sacked one or two.

INT: Okay. So returning to the 12 people that were before you, would it be the same management team that manages you that hired the previous 12 deans?

RES: No, no, the Vice Chancellor was new in about the middle of [the date of appointment has been removed] and yes, everybody else on that senior management team is subsequently new, yeah. So they're a relatively new senior management team, they've come at various times, the Director of Finance has [the timing of the appointment has been removed] arrived, but they are actually relatively inexperienced, that I think is a major, major problem for them, none of them really have a great depth of senior management experience.

INT: Interesting. A question that arose in talking to other deans, which I wasn't aware of until I started this research, is very few deans, I've been told by the deans, actually become Vice Chancellors, that's deans from business schools. And I thought since it's a multi-million pound organisation I would've thought there would be quite a few but I've been assured by deans that I've met that it seems to me an interesting paradox, could you comment on that Professor?

RES: [The first part of this answer has been removed to protect anonymity]

Actually now you mention it I don't know too many deans of business schools who have gone on to be Vice Chancellors, in fact I can't think of any, but why would you want to be a Vice Chancellor, apart from the money of course? But actually as a dean of the business school I can generate external revenue through consultancy work and money's not a great motivator for me anyway. But I really wouldn't want to be the Vice Chancellor, that's not a job that appeals to me at all.

INT: Because?

RES: Oh the administrative burden, the sheer volume of dross that must pass across your desk, I actually like the hands-on job of managing the school, I really don't

see myself in that role of Vice Chancellor.

INT: Okay, thank you, that's 41 minutes but anything else you care to mention or that I haven't asked you a question about that you think as a researcher 'what he should have said was', you said before you've done it, 'why didn't he ask me this question?' So help me out in my inadequacies if there's anything else you care to add.

RES: Yes, well this is actually my first experience of working in a post-'92 university and so I was interested to take this role on, in fact I saw it in that sense as a personal challenge to do that and it's really my first experience of working in a strong undergraduate school as well, prior to this I've only worked at postgrad and executive level, so I've found that an interesting contrast and one of the things that's impressed itself upon me is the great play that's made of student experience and the quality of the student experience. And we talk a lot about the student experience and we're always very concerned about the NSS, the National Student Survey, but it's one of the great paradoxes I suppose of a university in that we're very concerned about student experience but actually we promote people for research. So there's a great mismatch in managing an institution like this in that the rewards don't necessarily promote the appropriate behaviours and I think there's a lot that we could do there and if there's one thing that I would change it's the basis on which we promote and reward people and I think our structure and requirements for promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer to what in other universities is known as principal lecturer, associate professor and professor are inappropriate and could do with a dramatic overhaul to make the job of management easier.

INT: How would you change it?

RES: Well I would recognise the role of teaching more prominently alongside that of research, we say that we value teaching and research equally but we promote the researchers and when you get to the promotion panels, and I sit on lots and lots of promotion appointment panels, what do people turn to? Your list of publications. And yes we want people to be good teachers and yes we look for feedback and all of that but if your papers and outputs aren't up to snuff then you're not going to get the job, simple as that. And I don't say that that's a bad thing but what I do say is that we actually disadvantage those who are excellent teachers and excellent

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administrators. I've got a member of staff at the moment who is absolutely first class at running the portfolio of programmes for which she is responsible, s/he's absolutely excellent, but doesn't have much in the way of publications so it's very difficult to get her promoted but s/he clearly does deserve to be promoted and that's the sort of person we want to retain, so we don't help ourselves in that regard. Clearly if we're going to go through to associate professor and professor grades then clearly the most obvious and most dominant route is through research, research and publications, because how can you be a professor if you don't profess, you know? But nonetheless I think there is the opportunity for those who are exceptionally talented to reach those grades and if I think back to my previous institution, which was a red brick university, the director of research at the school didn't have a PhD, the Vice Chancellor didn't have a PhD, sorry the Deputy Vice Chancellor didn't have a PhD, so they don't worry so much about PhDs and so on, there are other issues that come into play there. So I think as a post-'92 we're a little too conscious of that and that

drives our thinking perhaps a little more than it should.

INT: Fascinating, thank you very much for that.

RES: Good, good, you're welcome.

INT: Just as a footnote we were talking about workload hours in a post-1992 university, Professor could you just repeat what you said to me just now please?

RES: Yes, we were talking about really utilisation of staff and one of the things that concerns me, particularly in the world that we're moving into with higher fees, with private institutions coming in, we're going to have to be more competitive and I don't think we're terribly efficient in the utilisation of our major resource. If everybody on the academic staff delivered 200 hours of teaching a year and produced two good quality journal articles that would be a big step forward for us, that would represent significant progress from where we are at the moment.

INT: This is interesting because there is a perception that post-1992s have traditionally been about teaching, so you're saying 200 hours in a year, so what do you think most or a significant proportion of your staff are actually delivering?

RES: I think that's a very good question, those are questions I'm asking myself because people are not necessarily delivering in terms of the research and I'm putting in place a framework against which we can better judge that and against which we can give people clearer views of the expectations, a planning framework if you like. Now of course the thing about plans is that they are plans, they are estimates as to the future and there are reasons why people may not achieve that, that's fair enough, that's understood, but I think we need a higher degree of accountability, I don't notice that people refuse to take the money yet sometimes I see them reluctant to take on additional responsibilities, which I

think it is perfectly reasonable for me to request them to do.

INT: Thank you. [End of dean] [End of Recording]

Appendix 4:

Participant Information Sheet and Interview Schedule

Participant Information Sheet

The Research

I would like to research leadership and followers in Post 1992 universities.

Therefore, I am currently undertaking a doctorate at the University of Birmingham looking at this issue and would appreciate your co-operation.

The research question is:

What Does It Mean To Be A Leader/ Follower In A Post-1992 University Business School?

The purpose of this research study is to critically evaluate the leadership of Post 1992 university business schools, the former Polytechnics, which were awarded university status in 1992 (Pratt, 1997). The author's interest in this area arises from eighteen years of experience working with UK universities, both in the state and private sectors of higher education. The research will evaluate leadership and followership inside selected business schools by interviewing academics, whilst recognising the possibility that academics can be both leaders and followers. The research design has been informed by and builds upon the work of other studies in this field. The plan is to conduct interviews not only academics with management responsibilities, but also with those who do not have a formal leadership role, who may however sense they have a role as an informal leader within their business school.

The information gathered during the research will be considered together with literature on leadership. Excerpts from the notes, with names and identifying features removed, will be used in the thesis. Quotations may also be used in books or papers, again without any identifying features, subject to research ethics.

A participant consent form is enclosed, forming an agreement between each respondent and the researcher whereby the person has the right both to withdraw and confidentiality.

Risks addressed:

If a respondent voices negative comments about colleagues and leadership in their business school. Great care will be taken to ensure that comments are confidential, and

that any identifying features are removed if they are quoted in the thesis.

If you decide to participate, we will arrange a mutually convenient, time and place to meet.
If you prefer, our meeting can take place away from your university campus.

The interview will take approximately 45minutes.

The content of the interview will be formed of a semi structured questions.
For example,

Why are some people regarded as ‘leaders’ rather than others?

What is it that enables certain people with limited formal authority to exert considerable influence, while others remain relatively powerless despite holding a formal role?

How do those involved experience leadership as it unfolds?

How is personal agency constrained and/or enhanced through access to and control of resources and other sources of power?

What is it like to be a [research professor, Dean, Programme leader]?

What do staff comments say about what staff believe about their university?

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Notes on the collected data will be anonymous and only used for research purposes. This means that data from the research will only be available to the PhD supervisory team at the University of Birmingham and to the External Examiner for my thesis. The research may also be used as part of written papers or books, but without your name and excluding any identifying characteristics, and subject to research ethics.

Informed Consent

If you have any questions about this Participant Information Sheet, or any other aspect of the research please contact me.

If you would wish to check that the information gathered from our meeting is correct please contact me.

Right to Withdraw

You have the right to withdraw from the study up to two months after our meeting has taken place.

I very much hope that you feel able to participate in this research.

Consent Form

Researcher: Michael Nieto

Purpose

The interview is part of my research for the award of a PhD at the University of Birmingham.

Confidentiality

Research ethics will be observed at all times in the analysis and use to which data may be put. The data will only be available to the supervisory team at the University of Birmingham and to the External Examiner for my thesis, but your name will be excluded and any identifying characteristics removed.

Right to Withdraw

You have the right to withdraw from the study up to two months after the observation takes place.

Your consent to participate in this research is appreciated. As a research participant you

should be aware of your rights to:

1. *Refuse participation whenever and for whatever reason you wish.*
2. *Withdraw from participating at any time.*
3. *Refuse to answer any question or complete all or parts of a questionnaire.*
4. *Have your anonymity maintained, if you so request.*
5. *Decide to retain anonymity regarding part or all of any responses you provide.*
6. *Be able to reject the use of data gathering devices such as tape recorders and video cameras.*

Nieto, M. L. (2006) *An Introduction to HRM: An Integrated Approach*.
Basingstoke: Palgrave Mcmillan.

Acknowledgement:

Please sign this form to show that we have agreed its content

Signed (researcher):

Date:

Signed (respondent):

Date:

Interview Schedule

Leader experiences

Burgoyne and James (2006) sought to find underlying motives, through questioning staff about the why, how, what, of leadership in their organisational context. *‘The interview protocol had questions framed to explore ‘why’ and ‘how did you decide’ as well as ‘what’, covering the integration of leadership development with business strategy, assumptions of leadership’*

What is it like to be a [research professor, Dean, Programme leader]?

How do you think those around you experience leadership in a Post 1992 university business school?

Why in your experience, are some people regarded as ‘leaders’ rather than others?

What is it that enables certain people with limited formal authority to exert considerable influence, while others remain relatively powerless despite holding a formal role?

What are your experiences of leadership in a transforming organisational context?

How is personal agency constrained and/or enhanced through access to and control of resources and other sources of power?

Experiences of leadership within their organisational context

To further underpin the questioning of respondents the questions will also ask about each respondent’s organisational self-awareness. This approach is also informed by the questioning design of Professor Erickson’s (2010) research on educational leaders:

Why do you think social groups such as A (senior managers) and B (lecturers) not socialise with each other?

What do staff comments say about what people believe about their university?

Perceptions regarding the realities of leadership in practice

The inclusion of leadership stories, as proposed by Gabriel and Griffiths in Cassell and Symon (eds) (2004, p.114) can encourage respondents to tell of how leadership works in their organisation, what kinds of leaders are well regarded, or not, and who tends to be asked to serve as a leader. Stories of leadership in practice will offer valuable insights into the respondents’ perceived reality of their organisation. ‘Searching for the leadership stories

enable us to study change in uniquely illuminating ways, revealing how wider issues are viewed.

How does leadership work in your business school?

What kinds of leaders are well regarded, or not?

Who tends to be asked to serve as a leader?

Please tell me about some leadership stories which illuminate and reveal how leadership is viewed in the business school?